

HARRISON FORD TAKES ON THE FUTURE IN 'BLADE RUNNER'

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Rod Serling's

JUNE 1982/\$2

THE TWILIGHT ZONE

NEW JOURNEYS OF THE IMAGINATION
AND ALWAYS THE UNEXPECTED

Magazine

A TZ First!

Richard Matheson's 'THE DOLL'

THE 'TWILIGHT ZONE' EPISODE YOU NEVER SAW

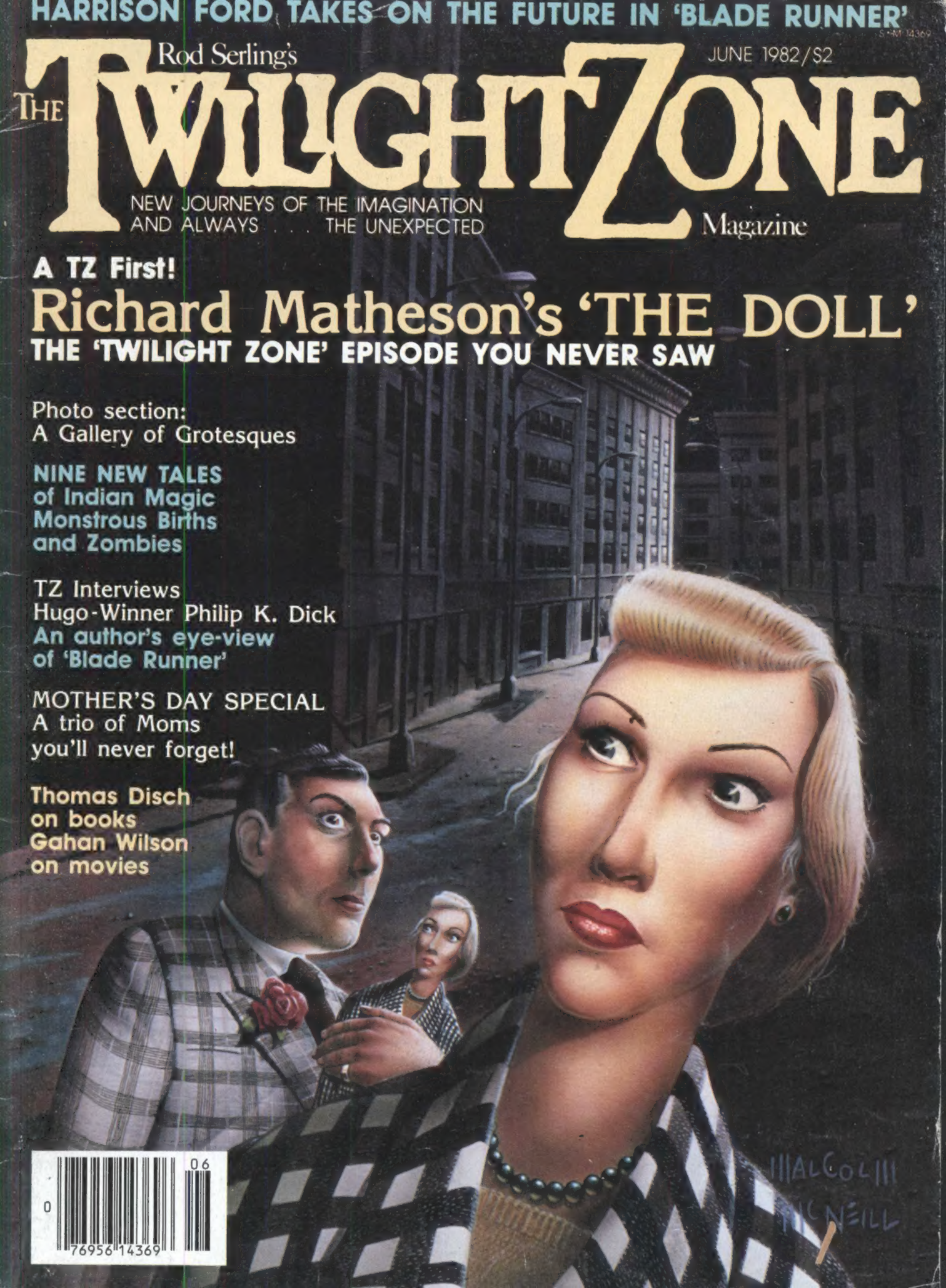
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A Gallery of Grotesques

NINE NEW TALES
of Indian Magic
Monstrous Births
and Zombies

TZ Interviews
Hugo-Winner Philip K. Dick
An author's eye-view
of 'Blade Runner'

MOTHER'S DAY SPECIAL
A trio of Moms
you'll never forget!

Thomas Disch
on books
Gahan Wilson
on movies



MALCOLM
MCNEILL

ROD SERLING'S THE TWILIGHT ZONE MAGAZINE

FEATURES

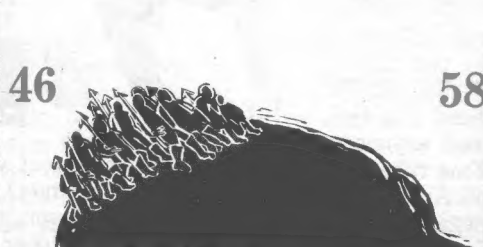
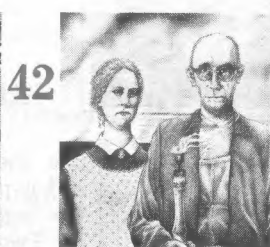
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Cover art by Malcolm McNeill



The mind's eye . . .

The late John Collier was well known for dozens of wonderfully macabre short stories (such as "The Chaser," adapted in 1960 for *The Twilight Zone*), as well as for the bizarre novel *His Monkey Wife*, but his strangest book may well have been his last. It was called Milton's "Paradise Lost": Screenplay for *Cinema of the Mind*, and though there was briefly some talk that Fellini might try to film it, the book was really the cinematic equivalent of closet drama, written not for stage or screen but for the reader's imagination. One of the screenplay's most memorable images, I recall, was of the Fall of the Rebel Angels; Collier described them as filling the skies like a fall of snow.

(Incidental note: Next month's TZ will feature an interview with the celebrated Canadian writer Robertson Davies, whose novel *The Rebel Angels* is currently winning much acclaim here; and the following month will see an interview with *The Twilight Zone*'s Douglas Heyes, director of—among other episodes—"The Chaser.")

Readers of this month's TZ will have the chance to exercise their own minds' eyes with *The Doll*, an unproduced *Twilight Zone* script by **RICHARD MATHESON**. Matheson himself pictured Martin Balsam and Mary La Roche in the two main roles, according to **MARC SCOTT ZICREE**'s *Story Behind 'The Doll,'* but you are free to cast anyone you like, from *Twilight Zone* regulars Burgess Meredith and Anne Francis to Arnold Schwarzenegger and Nastassia Kinski. Dream-casting imaginary movies is good clean fun, and rest assured that no matter how wild your choices are, they can't be any worse than some of the casts that have actually made it to the screen—such as dark and hulking Oliver Reed playing the brother of pale, skinny-as-a-rail Michael Crawford in *The Jokers*, or swart blue-collar-type Charles Bronson playing an upper-middle-class Manhattan architect opposite Hope Lange in *Death Wish*. (And a free *Twilight Zone* cat poster to the first



R. Matheson

R. C. Matheson

Sargent



Tem

Koch

Connolly



Nemec

Balfour

Pass

reader who points out what those films have in common.)

Richard Matheson, subject last September and October of our only two-part interview, is currently looking forward to this fall's Broadway opening of his new suspense thriller, *Now You See It*; and Marc Scott Zicree is looking forward to the publication of his *Twilight Zone Companion* (that's the new title), due this fall from Bantam. Also featured in this issue is **RICHARD CHRISTIAN MATHESON**, of that same creative tribe, who contributes a devastating short-short called *The Dark Ones*. It's a far cry from the author's first TZ

tale, the gently cheerful "Holiday," and it packs a lot of power into a few hundred words.

Two other writers make return visits in this issue. **PAMELA SARGENT**, who offered a satiric look at human-animal relations in October's "Out of Place," here sounds a darker, more haunting note in *The Broken Hoop*, a tale of two cultures and two heavens. With *The Golden Space* recently out from Timescape and the young-adult *Earthseed* soon to be published by Harper & Row, she's now hard at work on a longer novel, *Venus of Dreams*. The prolific **STEVE RASNIC TEM**, author of "Sleep" in

our March issue, returns with *Alan's Mother*, a poignant tale about death and maturity in the tradition of Walter Van Tilburg Clark's "The Watchful Gods." Since his previous appearance here Tem has sold several new stories—and look for his novelette in Alan Ryan's religious fantasy anthology *Perpetual Light*, due in October from Warner Books.

If Tem's is the mildest of the three Mother's Day tales we've gathered for you this month, the nastiest by far comes from **ROGER KOCH** of Bloomington, Indiana. A self-described free-lance portrait artist-turned-househusband, Koch has taught English as a Peace Corpsman in Thailand, traveled throughout Southeast Asia, Indonesia, India, and Iran, and worked as, among other things, a social services caseworker—an occupation which forms the background of *Home Visit*.

DOLLY OGAWA's tale also has a touch of autobiography in it. "I know something about musicians and a lot about mothers," she says, having "just barely survived the raising of four oddly assorted creative offspring," some of them, like her main character, musically inclined. *Zombies* is her first published story.

This issue also marks the fiction debut of **BRUCE BALFOUR**, though he's published interviews with sf/fantasy writers in various other magazines. He is currently studying computer science at the University of California, Santa Cruz, and reports: "I'm interested in artificial intelligence. If things go well, I may try for a Ph.D. from Stanford. Then I'll declare myself Emperor."

The theme of motherhood resurfaces, in a rather macabre form, in *Mrs. Halfbooger's Basement* by **LAWRENCE C. CONNOLLY**, whose fiction has appeared in those two venerable and much-loved magazines, *Amazing* and *Fantastic*. Now living and writing in Pittsburgh (which, to horror buffs, is becoming as identified with George Romero as Providence is with Lovecraft), Connolly has worked as a newspaper reporter, print shop manager, folk singer, and studio musician.

Anniversary Dinner also features a certain rather furtive hint of motherhood. The story's by **D. J. PASS**, a native Georgian and ex-

newspaperman now living in Nova Scotia, where he's been occupied, of late, in renovating both a house and a novel. *Anniversary Dinner* was written as a going-away present for a friend about to drive alone from Georgia to Arizona, and, says Pass, "I hope it makes your readers as paranoid as it did him."

Our lead story this issue is by **DAVID NEMEC**, a New York writer whose most recent novel was *Bright Lights, Dark Rooms*, published in 1980 by Doubleday, with two more due to appear this October: *Bad Blood* from Dial and *The Systems of M. R. Shurnas* from Riverrun Press. Two of his stories have also been included in Martha Foley's yearly honor roll of *Best American Short Stories*. As *Browning's Lamps* demonstrates so delightfully, NemeC has a special feel for the lore and color of old-time baseball, having written extensively on the sport, including the historical text for *The Ultimate Baseball Book* (Houghton Mifflin, 1979) and a series of baseball quiz books for Macmillan.

By way of postscript, we owe a special mention to Boston writer **RICHARD BOWKER**, whose ingenious story "The Other Train Phenomenon" appeared in our February issue but whose name failed to appear on this page. Del Rey Books has just brought out his novel *Forbidden Sanctuary*, and the least you can do is buy it.

We also owe another mention, with thanks, to reader Robert Anderson, whose sharp eyes have spotted two more omissions from our Show-by-Show Guide: teleplay credit for "Five Characters in Search of an Exit" in our November issue should have gone to Rod Serling, and, in the following issue, Robert Drasin deserved music credit for "The Hunt."

As we go to press, we've learned of the death at fifty-three of **PHILIP K. DICK**, who's interviewed in this issue by **JOHN BOONSTRA**, film critic for the *Hartford Advocate*. His death seems all the more tragic because it comes on the eve of the release of *Blade Runner*, which promised to be one of the most talked-about films of the year. Phil Dick would have shared, deservedly, in its success.

—TK

THE ROD SERLING'S TWILIGHT ZONE MAGAZINE

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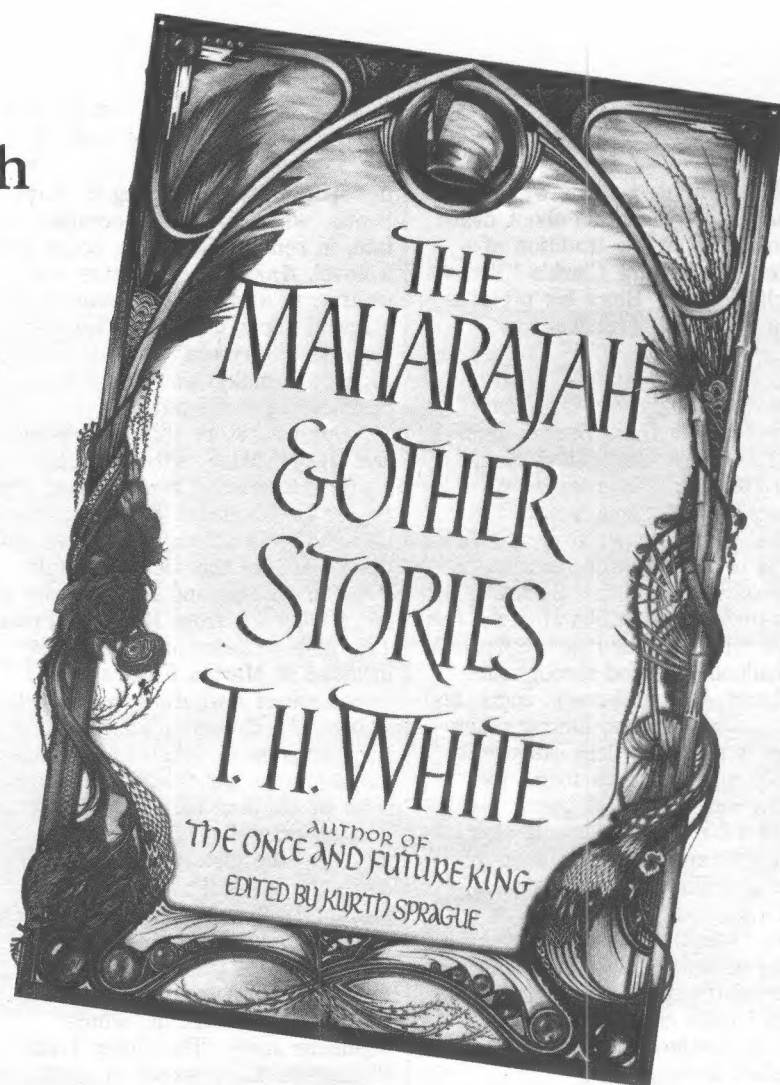
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Books

by Thomas M. Disch

T. H. White is the author of one book so hugely good and epochally successful that all his other works seem to be merely the harbingers or the echoes of that central masterpiece—which is, of course, *The Once and Future King*. Reading *The Maharajah and Other Stories* (Putnam, \$12.95) is therefore a bit like watching Liza Minelli in a remake of *The Wizard of Oz*: comparisons and some degree of disappointment are inevitable. No matter how good some of these tales may be (and their range shades evenly from memorable to so-so), none of them has the authority of his once-and-forever retelling of the Arthurian legends. No other Arthur, Guinevere, Lancelot, Merlin, or Mordred can hold a candle to White's, nor is there another mythic Merrie England that can measure up to his Camelot. His colors are rich, his focus sharp, and his compassionate range Shakespearean.

What, then, did he lack? Why is there only the one great book and not a shelf of them? *The Maharajah* suggests one answer: he lacked a facility for dramatic invention (which was not a liability in the Arthurian book, for obvious reasons). Again and again in these stories White will posit a potentially dramatic situation and then provide no drama or one that is perfunctory and hackneyed. In tales of ritual or predestinate inevitability, as in "Kin to Love," an account of an "ordinary" rape/murder and the subsequent "ordinary" execution of the criminal, this lack of original invention isn't bothersome, but when it has the effect of laming what might otherwise have been a masterpiece of macabre horror, like "The Troll," one could weep. Even though enfeebled by an ending as traditional as a banker's tie, "The Troll" is an object lesson to anyone who aspires to write fantasy of hallucinatory believability. Add to the titles already mentioned "The Spaniel Earl," a story about a seventeenth-century English nobleman traumatized in early childhood to believe himself a lapdog and indulged through his life in this conviction, and you have the cream of the collection. No more



than an hour's reading, even if you're as slow a reader as I am, and worth making out a request slip for at the library. But for your own library shelves the book to invest in is still *The Once and Future King*.

Or, if you've already read that and agree with me as to its merits, then try *Aztec* by Gary Jennings (Avon, \$3.95). When I reviewed the hardcover of *Aztec* in *The Washington Post*, I called it "an historical diorama of the broadest dimensions, a meditation on the human condition that bears pondering, and a story of unflinching (if variable) power to bind a spell." Also: "The social panorama of pre-Columbian Mexico that we view through the narrator's eyes registers as alien and credible in an ever-accruing multitude of humanly significant details. *Aztec* deserves to supplant Prescott's *The Conquest of Mexico* as the Authorized Popular Version of one of history's most awesome confrontations."

I repeat my rave here, because I think there is a significant correlation between the appeal of one aspect of sf and that of a certain kind of historical novel, the kind typified by *Aztec* or by Mary Renault's incomparable recension of the Theseus myth, *The King Must Die*. Both Jennings's and Renault's novels are based much more on the findings and hypotheses of anthropology than on narrative history, written records being in short supply for both pre-Homeric Greeks and pre-Columbian Aztecs. These works are speculative in the same way that, in sf, an internally consistent alien ecology or culture must be speculative—with the difference that the historical novelist does have sturdier evidential foundations for his inventions and may build to proportionally greater heights without the risk of his whole edifice collapsing into a picaresque jumble of unrelated fancies. Readers who get off on this world-building side of sf would do well, the next

time they're threatened with famine, to consider *Aztec* as an alternate source of epic protein.

There is another way in which the sf and the historical imagination may cross-fertilize, and that is in stories of time travel into the past. Since Mark Twain invented the idea in 1889, it has become almost a sub-genre in its own right. The drama of time travel lies in the collision between an historical civilization and a consciousness formed in our own time; between, as well, the sense of history as an inalterable fact and the effort of some Connecticut Yankee to make his mark on it—or not to, if the time traveler observes the decorums of field anthropology. The second possibility gets around the paradoxes involved in introducing microwave mousetraps into the court of Charlemagne, but drama is harder to come by, since the protagonist-time traveler must keep such a low profile.

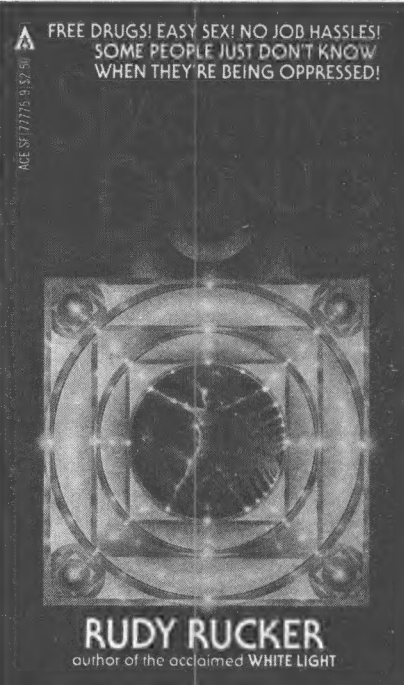
All of this preamble to explain the particular excellence and originality of Michael Bishop's *No Enemy But Time* (Timescape, \$15.95), a time-travel novel that does it the hard way and succeeds. Bishop's hero is born in Seville in 1962, the bastard son of Encarnacion Ocampo, a mute Morisco "whore and black marketeer," and a black enlisted man in the Strategic Air Command. Adopted into the family of another SAC staff sergeant, he becomes John Monegal and grows up in a variety of stateside Air Force bases. The milieu of career servicemen is one that Bishop, an Air Force brat himself, knows like the back of his hand, and his novel shares the virtue of so many of his best stories in portraying that milieu realistically and sympathetically, but without the Alamo psychology of the School of Heinlein.

Through his childhood John Monegal has dream visions of Pleistocene Africa, and as a young man he is recruited as a time traveler to that era and area, when *Homo sapiens* was only a twinkle in the eye of the apelike *Homo habilis*. The core of the story's science-fictional excitement lies in John's life as an assimilated member of a tribe of habilene hunters, and in these Pleistocene chapters, which alternate

in a strict A-B-A-B pattern with chapters recounting John's growing up, Bishop has created a vicarious treat of three-scoops-and-a-cherry dimensions, a kind of Tarzan for the eighties, based on sound paleontological evidence and shrewd anthropological extrapolation, but no less fun for being well informed.

The remarkable thing about Bishop's book is that the story of John's growing up through the sixties and into the eighties always holds its own dramatically against his adventures among the habilenes. As in Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*, the alternating time schemes are tightly interlocked so that present and past illuminate and elucidate each other. As in Benford's *Timescape*, the chapters set in the recent historical past serve as a kind of litmus test of the author's ability to tell home truths about real people. The clarity, sanity, and truthfulness of these essentially "mainstream" chapters give the author's more imaginative flights an authority and verisimilitude all too rare in genre sf. Like both Le Guin and Benford, Bishop is determined to write about human goodness without resorting to the mock heroics of formula adventure stories. There are no villains in the book, even among the habilenes. The central and absorbing drama of the book is the hero's growing love for the pre-Rhematic habilene, Helen. (The Rhematic period is, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, the first period of specifically human history, when language came into being.) Looming behind this love story is a larger theme, the formation across the entire span of history of the Family of Man, a phrase that becomes, as the novel ripens to its conclusion, no mere liberal piety but a fully realized dramatic affirmation.

This is not to say the book is flawless. As with most time-travel stories, the rationale for "how it's done" is embarrassingly unconvincing. Better to offer no explanation than one that leaks this badly. But that's a small exception to take to a large achievement. After *No Enemy But Time* it would be an insult to continue to speak of Michael Bishop as one of science fiction's most promising writers. The promise has been fulfilled.



Less than a year ago, in reviewing Rudy Rucker's *White Light*, I wrote, "*White Light* is a good, intelligent, powerful novel, and the most auspicious debut in the sf field since . . . Well, considering it's his first novel, since I don't know when." I was wrong. *White Light* deserves at least that much praise, but it was not Rucker's first novel. *Spacetime Donuts* (Ace, \$2.50) is his first novel, and it saddens me to report it's pretty much a dud. Rucker and/or Ace Books did well to withhold it from publication till *White Light* had garnered due garlands—and would have done still better to have consigned it to the limbo of a file drawer, at least until Rucker had taken the trouble to rewrite from scratch the last one-half to two-thirds of the book. It starts off well enough but really goes off the rails around page seventy-five, when, like a dybbuk, the spirit of Chapter Twenty-Six-or-Bust takes control of Rucker's speeding fingers and flagging imagination.

Chapters one through nine are a semi-fun remake of *Brave New World* as filtered through the consciousness of a reader of Zap Comix. (Rucker lays claim not only to a Ph.D. in math but to experience as an underground cartoonist.) There are too many stock figures—a forever-spaced-out pothead who is never without his identifying

reefer, a standard-issue all-too-absent-minded professor—but as compensation there's also a good deal of zany invention and viable collegiate humor. The plot curdles as Rucker brings on his Big Idea, a journey round the universe by "scaleship," shrinking to subatomic scale and then returning to a size-thirty waist via the Extra Large sizes of the macrocosm. It might have worked at novelette length, but here Rucker is tripped up by his own honesty. He refuses to humanize the quarks and black holes at either end of his universe, and so the wonder-journey proceeds through its crystal landscapes in the spirit of an educational pamphlet. ("And this, children, is a Molecule!") I enjoyed the same ride at Disneyland a whole lot more. Worse yet, the scaleship's journey has only a tenuous effect on the development of the Rebels-Against-Utopia plotline, which, when we get back to it, collapses upon the author like an act of God. Passages of hysterical violence alternate with paragraphs of maundering psychologese:

The next few days passed in a flickering of wakefulness and unconsciousness. It was hard to say which was worse . . . When awake, Vernor had the pain and the awful guilt to contend with, but when he was asleep these elements were incorporated into terrible, merciless visions, unlimited in space and time.

In such cases, sleep is the right choice. Even the most terrible, merciless vision is, after all, limited in space and time, and the weariest novel comes to an end.

The Engines of the Night (Doubleday, \$10.95) so candidly asks to be censured that any reviewer is put into the position of the sadist in the classic joke, who, from a more refined cruelty, refuses to grant the masochist the beating he begs for. Rarely does a book appear that is at once so self-loathing (one of the author's favorite characterizations of himself) and so self-serving (a subject on which he is more reticent). The publisher abets its author's desire to make his name anathema by publishing blurbs from two colleagues

who evidently disliked the book as much as I did, and the following equivocal praise from Algis Budrys: "Destined to be misunderstood and misused, this cry from the heart will prove once more that honesty is suicidal."

I think, on the contrary, that it's destined to be understood by anyone who bothers to read it and used as a cautionary example of how the practice of hack writing, too long indulged, can sap the character, warp the judgment, and turn to jelly the prose of writers who can't resist a fast buck. The author (who, as a special, Dantean torment, shall remain nameless in this review) would seem in his own darker moments to endorse even the harshest of these judgments, but he also suffers fits of megalomania when he insists that his career has been peculiarly congruent with the history of all science fiction, and that he embodies a kind of tragic fate that dooms him (and all science fiction) to mediocrity, oblivion, and a pauper's grave. He loves to cover himself with ashes and tell sad tales of the deaths of writers, such times as his word processor isn't on automatic pilot and churning out such portentous piffle as this passage, which is the book's only gloss on its title:

Ah but still. Still, oh still. Still Kazin, Broyard, Epstein, Podhoretz and Howe; grinding away slowly in the center of all purpose, taking us to the millennium: the engines of the night.

(Those names are the critics the author feels particularly neglected by, but as to what the rest of that trans-syntactical paragraph may mean, only the author knows—and he's not saying.)

Does this seem a mite draconian? Well, judge for yourself. Here's a less inchoate example of the author in his *kvetching* vein, with pique in control and self-pity momentarily in abeyance:

. . . The writer—the experienced writer in any event—knows that most editors acquire and publish not in an effort to be successful so much as to avoid failure. Defensive driving. They seek, then, that which they consider

safe, and the writers who are at the mercy of those editors function from the same motivation. (It can be presumed that those who feel or function differently find it almost impossible to get their work into the mass market.) . . . Science fiction, like all commercial fiction (and quality lit too although in a slightly different way), can perhaps be best understood in terms of what is *not* written rather than what is. Self-censorship controls. Any writer who understands this at all will know what not to try. As good a definition of professionalism as any other.

If that's professional, how would you define craven? Such pre-emptive surrender to the "demands of the market" is all the more reprehensible when one realizes that the author is a man who presently makes his living by selling his own professional expertise, pseudonymously, to fledgling writers.

If the book were only a "personal bitch" (as Alexei Panshin describes it on the back cover), it would not be worth even this much notice, but it lays claim in its subtitle, "Science Fiction in the Eighties," to have a larger subject. The claim is specious. As a critic, the author is careless, ungenerous, and fainthearted. He praises the work of his friends out of proportion to their merits, especially that of Robert Silverberg, which so often echoes the author's lamentations on the futility of writing sf. There is scarcely one generalization about sf in the book to which some significant exception cannot be made, either because the author practices defensive reading or because he writes faster than he thinks. And for all his constant insistence on the essential, inescapable second-rateness of all sf, he never has the guts to come out and say that any particular book by any particular writer is bad. Indeed, there is scarcely a senior member of the sf establishment that isn't kowtowed to at some point and scarcely a junior member that gets mentioned.

All in all, a shameful performance. And you can quote that on the cover of the paperback. 17

Screen

by Gahan Wilson

Quest for Fire

(Twentieth Century-Fox)

Directed by Jean-Jacques Annaud
Screenplay by Gerard Brach

Defying, among others, the antievolutionist Institute for Creation Research, director Jean-Jacques Annaud has had the gall to show us his version of what we looked like and acted like some eighty thousand (count 'em, eighty thousand) years ago.

Now of course none of us, or at least none of us with any spunk, agrees with any other one of us as to how it was back then. The above-mentioned creationists would have us neatly and cleanly descended from Adam and Eve (though there are, even in this tidy thesis, a few irritating loose ends such as Lilith), a depressingly large number, I suspect, hover around the theories advanced by Alley Oop and/or *One Million Years B.C.*; folks like you and me hold vague, widely-varying theories lazily based on our faulty and superficial educations; and the experts—God help us!—bicker in the stratosphere.

All that accepted and for the nonce nudged to one side, *Quest for Fire* is, without doubt or quibble, the most carefully planned, most sincerely approached, and, yes, *best* movie we have yet had on those long-gone ancients who tottered about in furs, clumsily setting the stage for ourselves, their surprising descendants. Its makers clearly took the whole project very seriously, and they went to really remarkable lengths and hired all sorts of expensive, cleverly selected people to insure that the film would feebly represent our now-fossilized ancestors.

They hired Desmond Morris, for instance, author of *The Naked Ape*, etc., and without doubt the most famous ex-Curator of Mammals of the London Zoo, to work out the nonverbal communications that the beings of eighty thousand years ago might have hit on. Anthony Burgess, who built a most convincing future



"Giving conviction to such lines as 'Kwahl En kwahl' " In the prehistoric epic *Quest for Fire*, actors Ron Perlman, Everett McGill, and Nameer El-Kadi—all appropriately made up—appear as "honest-to-God beetle-browed cavemen."

English for his *Clockwork Orange* and who's an expert on James Joyce and many other strange languages, was hired to figure out how they might have communicated whilst in a verbal mood.

The result of this collaboration is subtle, touching, and convincing. Mr. Morris's signals can be read by us (as he pointed out in an interview, it really wouldn't have been very bright to make them incomprehensible to the twentieth-century ticket buyer), but they are not *of* us. They are strange. The folk in *Quest* do not nod "Yes," but give a small, agreeing bob; they do not shake their heads "No," but avert their faces slightly with a kind of duck, and so on. It all works very well. Mr. Burgess came up with something like one hundred words of a language that, according to theory, *could* sound more or less like Indo-European, which supposedly was the *lingua franca* back in those good old days. It sounded perfectly okay to me, and I think its being worked over so carefully must have helped the actors considerably in giving

conviction to such lines as "Kwahl En kwahl" etc, etc.

The movie's plot is decidedly science-fictiony, and I found it now and then somewhat cumbersome to my going along with its fantasy. It is asking a lot of someone who has just quit Sixth Avenue to believe he is looking at honest-to-God beetle-browed cavemen; it's asking an awful lot more of him to have him believe that these cavemen came in contact not only with positively contemporary-looking (albeit primitive) types which anybody from Akron, Ohio, with his American Express card in order, can jet to and take instant photos of, to his heart's content. This jarred me, at first, but I got used to it, and in the end, it gave the movie some of its best effects.

On the whole, by and large, the film is quite remarkably credible. You are brought into it gently, into the world of the Cro-Magnon, and the mood is almost nostalgic at first because we encounter all sorts of symbols we're familiar with. It's almost like something we've been

through and personally remember. There's the fire, for one. We are instantly aware of its preciousness, its life-givingness. It's being lovingly tended by a caveman in shaggy furs who pokes helpfully at its warm glow and carefully feeds it fresh logs.

Wolves prowl outside its light, hating it. One darts in close, snarling, but the caveman tosses a burning stick at the creature and it howls off with a patch of flame on its back. We're safe with this fire. Nothing can get us. We're okay. It's a great feeling.

Then we move on into the cave, and there they are: all our monkey grandfathers and grandmothers, our simian uncles and aunts, sprawled and snuggled together on the rocks, the soles of their feet showing, their eyes shut in sleep under their gorilla brows, grunting and meeping in their almost animal dreams. One uncle over there is wincing at the vision of a saber-toothed tiger coming too close; another, nearer, is smacking his lips over the taste of fat meat; and an aunt, without waking, is disposing of a louse with a pinch of her fingers.

We know them all. It's easy to recognize them. It's us, without the trimmings. Before we got smart. Before we wised up. It's the super-rubes, the innocents we sprang from.

This affection, once achieved, does not depart. Throughout, we are fond of our innocent forebears. We chuckle affectionately at their fumbles, feel a kind of fatherly pride when they manage to pull off something, and sigh tenderly at their wistful vulnerability. They are so *dumb*, these sillies, that your heart can't help but go out to them.

The plot of the movie is, as the title implies, a quest for fire. Our grandfather and grandmother's tribe loses their fire and, there not being a working Zippo in the crowd, three heroes are chosen in the hope they can get hold of some and lug it back in a great little Stone Age fire-carrier some clever prop man came up with. The heroes are an intelligently mixed bag: a handsome type (in his Cro-Magnon way) played with a touching mix of bravery, stoicism, and confusion by Everett McGill; a big, lumpy type, trustworthy but not the swiftest, played by Ron Perlman; and a kind of dreamy type you suspect of



"I wouldn't be surprised to see the style catch on." In a tender moment, McGill and leading lady Rae Dawn Chong contemplate the full moon—and, symbolically, the future of man.



"... ever egging his subjects on to fresh naughtiness." The goat-bearded chief of the advanced Ivaka tribe confronts modern *Homo sapiens* in the person of Oscar-winning director Jean-Jacques Annaud.



"Maybe wearing that fur brought it all back to them." Elephants in costume made serviceable mastodons for a touching, rather mystical scene between man and beast.

probably being the smartest of the lot, but not the leader material, played quietly and very well by Nameer El-Kadi.

These three characters encounter one menace after another in their fire pursuit, and eventually, during a rescue, run into one of the best Cute Leading Ladies I've seen for I don't know how long. She's Rae Dawn Chong (daughter of comic Tommy Chong) ... she's covered all over with charcoal marking and blue clay—and that's all. I wouldn't be surprised to see the style catch on if this movie gets a good enough distribution, Rae Dawn wearing her blue clay and ash as flatteringly as she does.

The relationship between this woman and the three heroes is possibly the nicest thing in the film, despite my earlier comments regarding the unlikelihood of such historically diverse types ever having intercourse, literally or otherwise, with one another. The byplay

between the ape-men and the *Homo sapiens* female is excellently handled. I think my very favorite moment is Rae Dawn bursting into giggles at a funny event, looking around to share the laugh with one of the heroes, and realizing that none of the poor ninnies has yet developed a sense of humor. They just don't know there is any such a thing as a joke, and so her little giggle trails off. Excellent.

Humor is very present throughout *Quest for Fire*, and it's first rate. Some of the best comic louts to lurch across the screen are here present, including a dandy clutch of fearsome cannibals, a swell group of bandits who, lurking in the forest, are undone—to their astonishment—by the heroes' technical superiority, and a fine Neanderthal with remarkably insensitive fingers.

Rae Dawn Chong's tribe, the Ivaka—which, as I say, is a little hard to believe existed in the same era as our intrepid heroes, in

particular when one sees this tribe's relatively swanky huts and decorated pottery—is nonetheless delightfully presented. They seem to be a collection of jesters, their bodies cheerfully painted, their leaders wearing masks, all of them playing endless humiliating jokes, chortling away, having a swell time enjoying the foolishness of everything including sex, death, and pain. They are ribald gagsters all, male and female alike, and they seem to have no respect for anything whatsoever, unless it's for their goat-bearded chief, ever egging his subjects on to fresh naughtiness.

The animals are nicely handled, if not all that convincing from the standpoint of special effects. No one seems to be able to figure out how to turn a contemporary lion into a saber-tooth, and the producers of *Quest* are no exception. They give us very nice lions, to be sure, and the scene involving them is rather droll, but saber-teeth alone do not a saber-tooth make.

The mastodons, however—ah, the mastodons! Here is an odd achievement indeed. They are elephants wrapped in shaggy fur, and at first glance your instinct as a blasé viewer of special effects—you who have seen dragons, wise green gnomes, and God knows what else presented in such superb detail that even the very pores seem authentically alien—you, very understandably, can be excused if you snort from your theater seat at these transparent shams. A mastodon? Hah!

But it works. I don't know just how, but it works. It may be due to whoever designed the wise, patient, undeniably mastodon eye which is tossed at you in closeup at crucial points. Perhaps it is the elephants themselves, stirring under all that fur. Maybe wearing that fur brought it all back to them, the recollection of their old grandfathers and grandmothers and aunts and uncles so long ago vanished from upstate New York and elsewhere, now only to be glimpsed in effigy in some museum. Maybe this inspired them, somehow made actors of them. Who knows? Whatever, you will like the mastodons. Or at least I hope you will. I certainly liked the mastodons. In fact, I loved them. 17

Music

by Jack Sullivan

This column is devoted entirely to the music of **Dimitri Shostakovich** (1906–1975), the greatest symphonic composer of our time and easily the most prolific composer of spectral music. Shostakovich wrote an extraordinary number of genuinely dark and nightmarish works. Indeed, his finest work is in the spectral mode: when he tried to be patriotic or cheery—especially in his ambivalent and erratic attempts to appease the Soviet censors—he was often banal and self-consciously “uplifting.” But when he let the lid off his anxiety and anguish, he poured out great musical ideas of unsettling power.

Nowhere is this phenomenon more striking than in the Fourth Symphony (1936). This gigantic work begins with a brutal march and ends with an ethereal minor chord that is sustained by the lower strings for six minutes of pure gooseflesh. The repeating bass figures throb like an artery, while other instruments, including an ascending celesta and a muted trumpet, play doleful fragments as the chord dies away. Actually, the entire piece is fragmented, a kaleidoscope of disparate ideas—some gently lyrical but most piercingly dissonant—which appear out of nowhere and vanish, without development or recapitulation. Structurally and harmonically, this is the most original of Shostakovich's symphonies; emotionally, it is one of the darkest.

It is difficult for us to imagine how “pure” music—music without a text—could conceivably be politically subversive. Nevertheless, Stalin apparently felt that the despair and terror exploding through this work would hardly be inspiring to the masses or would hardly represent the official image of life in the Soviet Union he wished to project. So stern was Soviet censorship that the symphony was yanked out of circulation on the eve of its first performance and was not heard until 1961. The American premiere was

given by Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra in 1963, and the Philadelphians recorded the work the same year (**Symphony No. 4, Ormandy, Philadelphia Orchestra, Columbia MS-6459**). Still in print, this is one of the most thrilling recordings of Ormandy's career, a mirror image of his desultory efforts of late. Tempos are brisk, attacks are sharp, textures are clear, and the orchestra plays with great passion and intensity.

The Fifth Symphony, Shostakovich's most popular, is more conservative than the Fourth—very deliberately so, for Shostakovich was desperate to get off Stalin's blacklist. Subtitled “the creative reply of a Soviet artist to just criticism” (a truly nauseating label), the Fifth is conventionally regarded as a “safe,” unchallenging, classically structured work designed to make Stalin smile and to commemorate the October Revolution.

It has always struck me as being, in a sneaky way, considerably more than that. Yes, the piece does have a rousing finale with the required “patriotic” and “optimistic” sound; yes, the scherzo is folksy and

before the requisite “heroic” ending. The final timpani thwacks in that ending still sound awesome in the famous 1959 Leonard Bernstein recording, especially in the newly pressed budget-priced reissue (**Symphony No. 5, Bernstein, New York Philharmonic Orchestra, CBS MY-37218**). In fact, the entire performance has a tautness and conviction that no recent version surpasses. Worth looking for is an exciting out-of-print Previn version (**London Symphony Orchestra, RCA LSC-2866 OP**).

Fortunately, Previn's later recording of the Eighth Symphony (**Symphony No. 8, Previn, London Symphony Orchestra, Angel S-36980**) is still available, an overwhelming performance of an expressionistic work that once again got Shostakovich in trouble. One would think that the tense wartime atmosphere of 1943 would make a musical depiction of brutality and horror acceptable even to Stalin, but such was not the case. The Eighth was denounced by the Party as decadent and “formalistic,” and this gripping symphony, like the Fourth, was hurled into oblivion until the 1960s.

Structurally and harmonically, the Fourth is the most original of Shostakovich's symphonies; emotionally, it is one of the darkest.

jocular, if a bit caustic. Survival was indeed Shostakovich's first priority. Nevertheless, he got away with more than is generally acknowledged: the greater portion of the symphony is given over to darkness; including the long, gloomy first movement (which ends with another sustained minor chord embellished with a spooky celesta) and the tragic slow movement. Even the finale is interrupted by an extended wailing of pain from discordant strings

The work opens with a shuddery motif deep down in the low strings—an idea reminiscent of the Fifth Symphony but far more ghoulish—which sets the mood of the work. The first movement builds to a series of wrenching explosions for full orchestra, then slowly winds down into gloom and silence. Two macabre scherzos follow in rapid succession, the second exploding into an ugly climax for brass and gongs which introduces the long slow

movement. In this ghostly passacaglia, the heart of the work, the low strings (Shostakovich's favorite tonal color) repeat a sinuous, haunting melody some dozen times, while delicate woodwinds whisper high above them. For spectral atmosphere, this astonishing

This unusual work features another introspective passacaglia, as well as an incredibly athletic cadenza for the soloist. The most chilling movement is the first, which opens once again with dreary cellos and double basses, over which the soloist traces solemn figurations. At the

breathtaking. The late David Oistrakh, to whom the concerto is dedicated, manages this and every other difficult passage with tremendous virtuosity and nobility (*Violin Concerto No. 1, Oistrakh, New Philharmonia Orchestra, Angel S-36964*).

The Tenth Symphony, Shostakovich's major work from the 1950s, is an anomaly: for much of its epic length, it is sullen and gloomy, yet despite some criticism it survived the censors. Was its survival due simply to Stalin's death the year of its premiere (1953)? Or did it survive because the jaunty finale embodies, to quote Yeats, a case of "gaiety transfiguring all that dread"? One would think so listening to Herbert von Karajan's compelling reading (*Symphony No. 10, Karajan, Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Deutsche Grammophon DG-139020*), where the twirling woodwind theme in the finale sounds positively magical. For

The Eighth was denounced by the Party as decadent and "formalistic," and this gripping symphony, like the Fourth, was hurled into oblivion until the 1960s.

movement is surpassed in music only by Shostakovich's own deathbed works.

Another disquieting piece withheld for years from the public was the First Violin Concerto.

movement's end, the muted violin, determined to break free from the dark murk of the orchestra, soars as high above it as is humanly possible. Shostakovich is always good with endings, but this one is truly

"If you are seriously interested in science fiction, this is a 'must have' book." — Gene Roddenberry

Scifi fans: if you were to buy only one book on your hobby, this is the one. It's definitive — the one reference a buff *must* have. From A to Z — from *Abbott & Costello Go to Mars* to *Zontar: The Thing from Venus* — here are over 1,000 detailed entries on the best (and worst) in SF movies, TV, authors, publications, organizations and awards.

The superman who gives you this FUN reference book is *Starlog* and *Future Life* ex-editor Ed Naha. Ed assembles:

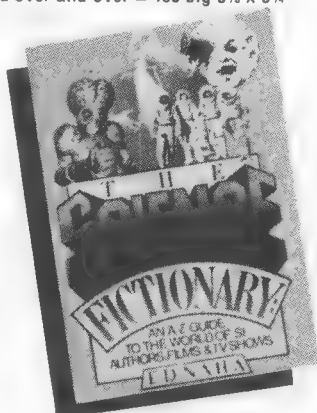
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the budget conscious, the young Andrew Davis offers a clean, conscientious performance (Davis, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Seraphim S-60255), if conscientiousness alone is enough in such searing, tragic music. One hopes that Previn, the most eloquent Shostakovich conductor, will soon get to the Tenth.

A decade after the Tenth, Shostakovich again incurred the displeasure of the Soviet regime, this time with his Thirteenth Symphony, a choral work subtitled "Babi Yar" because of its hellish depiction of the massacre of 200,000 Russian Jews. The authorities objected to Shostakovich's choice of text, a set of Yevtushenko poems condemning totalitarianism, anti-Semitism (clearly imputed by the poet to Soviet as well as Nazi regimes), and censorship.

In this work, Shostakovich showed that he could write great program music. "Fears like shadows slithered everywhere," intones the bass soloist in a description of life under Stalin, and the music itself—fearful, shadowy, and slithery—is a perfect embodiment of the text. Ormandy premiered the work in America, but his fine reading doesn't quite match the shattering account by Previn (Symphony No. 13, Previn, London Symphony Orchestra, Angel SZ-3766).

With the Fourteenth Symphony (1969), we move into the final, grimmest phase of Shostakovich's career, a phase given over almost entirely to contemplations of death. "What Shostakovich has summoned musically," wrote Rory Guy when the Fourteenth first appeared, "is a direct confrontation with death as specter, almost medieval in its dark and fearful intensity" (Symphony No. 14, Rostropovich, Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra, Columbia/Melodia M-34507).

Like its predecessor, the Fourteenth has a text, this time an anthology of poems about death. The symphony opens with a desolate violin solo which introduces Federico García Lorca's "De Profundis," an hallucinatory vision of a huge graveyard of dead lovers. A violent, flamenco-flavored motif then slashes its way through García Lorca's

With the Fourteenth Symphony, we move into the final, grimmest phase of Shostakovich's career, a phase given over almost entirely to contemplations of death.

"Malaguena," a poem which depicts death stalking through a Spanish tavern. The remaining poems similarly treat death as a terrifying rather than consoling reality. This is Shostakovich's most uncompromising symphony, not only in its cosmic pessimism but in its direct, angry swipe at Soviet tyranny ("Rotten cancer . . . horrid nightmare . . . mad butcher," shouts the soloist). The orchestration—for strings, percussion and two singers—is spare, austere and full of unforgettably unearthly effects. The most telling of these comes at the very end, when a madly galloping dissonant chord suddenly shuts off, leaving a terrible silence and emptiness which is surely the most precise evocation of death in music. "All powerful is death," chant the singers just before this awful moment:

It is on watch
Even in the hour of happiness
In the world of higher life it
suffers within us,
Lives and longs
And cries within us.

Composer and critic Eric Salzman recently wrote that despite its high quality, Shostakovich's late music is sometimes too "depressing." Indeed, the listener should be warned that this music is unremittingly bleak. Especially gray and ghostly are the unresolved trills in the Sonata for Violin and Piano (Sonata for Violin and Piano, Kremer, Gavrilov, Columbia/Melodia M-35109), and the bonelikeappings and rattlings in the Thirteenth String Quartet (String Quartet No. 13, Fitzwilliam Quartet, Oiseau-Lyre DSLO-9).

The climax of this movement toward the grave is the Fifteenth String Quartet (1974), Shostakovich's farewell to the world, an audacious, experimental work which fittingly

and movingly rounds out his controversial career. This last quartet consists of six slow movements in a row (including an elegy, a nocturne, a funeral march and an epilogue), each about death, each utterly black, and each filled with tremendous poetry and harmonic originality. It is astonishing that such a severe work, one so obsessively focused on a single terrible thing and with only a single tempo, can also contain such richness of invention. The ideas range from infinitely sad, hymnlike melodies, to defiantly jabbing single-note crescendos, to deathly silences. The ending, with its hollow open chords and stark atonal trills, simply vanishes into grayness, suggesting the fading of a heartbeat. The Taneyev Quartet, to whom this valedictory work is dedicated, plays with a tenderness and affection that only slightly soften the gloom (String Quartet No. 15, Taneyev Quartet, Columbia/Melodia M-34527).

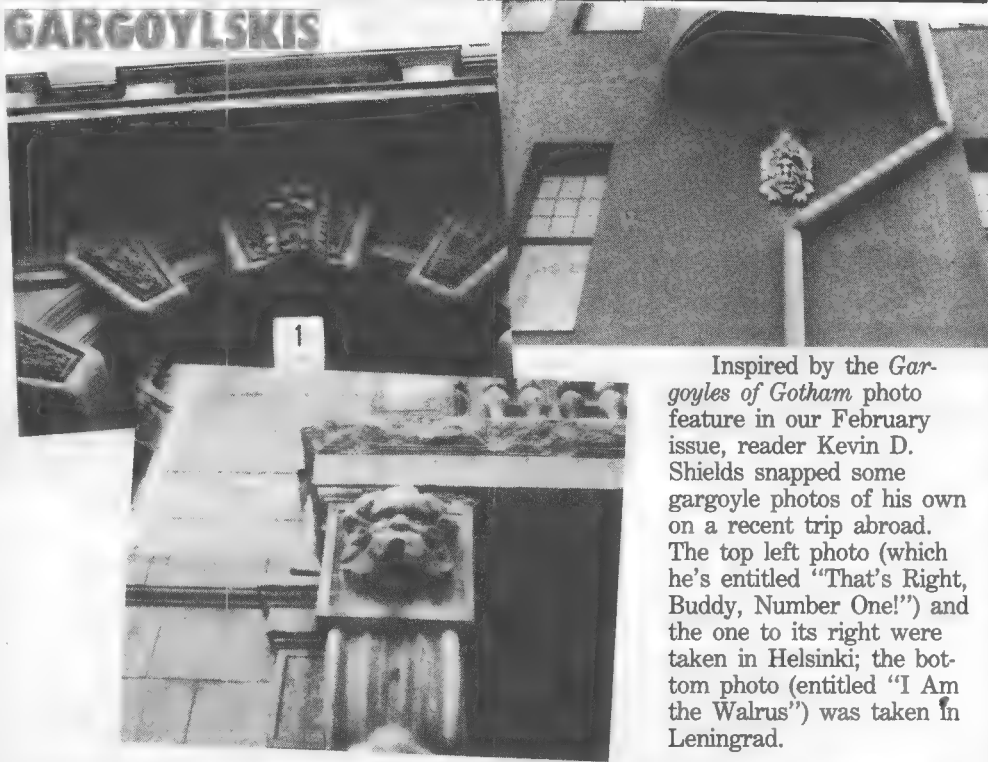
Yet gloom is by no means the only emotion in Shostakovich's late music. As Andrew Porter of *The New Yorker* recently pointed out: "In one way, the Frick recital was a profoundly depressing occasion, for it compelled one to think about the stricken, unhappy artist, confiding his sorrow to these intimate pages. And in another way, it was a profoundly inspiring occasion—a manifestation that the human spirit is indestructible, a *de profundis* from a voice that could not be silenced. These works contain utterances as moving, as poetic, as those in despairing Psalms, and are beautifully wrought, strangely imaginative music."

Many controversial, experimental composers, such as Bartok and Schoenberg, mellowed in their later years, but not Shostakovich. He did not go gentle into that good night.

Next month: Contemporary composers. 17

Etc.

GARGOYLSKIS



Inspired by the *Gargoyles of Gotham* photo feature in our February issue, reader Kevin D. Shields snapped some gargoyle photos of his own on a recent trip abroad. The top left photo (which he's entitled "That's Right, Buddy, Number One!") and the one to its right were taken in Helsinki; the bottom photo (entitled "I Am the Walrus") was taken in Leningrad.

wrote it, thanks also for the interesting accompanying piece on the making and coming of "Swamp Thing." The only thing that confused me in that second article was the question "How much Craven will a family-oriented film based on a comic book be able to take?"

That's a little like asking "How many brushstrokes by Joe Blow will a painting by Joe Blow be able to take?" The answer is, just as many as it takes, and not one more. The fact is that with the exception of the basic Swamp Thing character and setup, the story and film are my creation—pure Craven from beginning to end. And yet when this film was recently tested at Preview House in Hollywood with an audience of 8- to 18-year-olds, the response was 93% good to excellent! That's how much they could take. And love it!

I'm really not blowing my own horn so much as protesting the unspoken assumption leveled towards all writer/directors who earned their film wings by working in the violence/horror end of genre films: the assumption that that is all we can do. Far from it, guys. We're all just getting rolling, all still growing, and we all have a hell of a lot more capability, laughter, tenderness, and intelligence than the ways we clawed our way into the system allowed us to show. At least not show on the surface.

GET THIS CAT!



"Etc." is a department for you, the readers. We're looking for pithy views, provocative quotes, unusual photos, weird and amusing newspaper items (please send actual clippings for verification), surprising uses in the media of that magic phrase "the Twilight Zone," and any other tidbits suggesting that the

Twilight Zone exists right now here on earth. Enterprising readers whose material we use will receive, along with our lasting gratitude and an acknowledgement in these pages, a snazzy 12" x 18" poster of Maximilian, the *Twilight Zone* cat—just the sort of thing to brighten even the most miserable day.

UP FROM HORROR

TZ's Tom Seligson recently received the following letter from director Wes Craven (*The Last House on the Left*, *The Hills Have Eyes*, *Deadly Blessing*, and *Swamp Thing*), whom he interviewed in our February issue. Craven makes such an interesting and articulate case for himself that we thought his letter worth reprinting here:

Dear Tom:

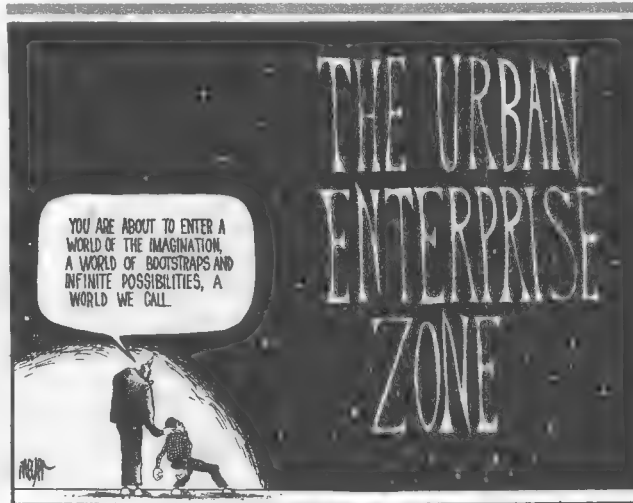
I'd like to thank you for one of the most even-handed, thorough and accurate interviews ever printed about this filmmaker. And, to whoever

It astonishes me it's taken so long for it to be seen that the best "horror" films, though sandbagged by ridiculously small budgets, have been raised right back up by their strong visions, and have been among the most free, uncensored, ribaldly funny, and telling films made in America during the last gasp of the 20th century.

Horror films have allowed us survival in a sink-or-swim marketplace, and at the same time allowed us—by both their nature and the nature of their young audience—incredible freedom to explore far beyond the frontiers of Establishment reality and morality. Only in horror films were we free to howl the pain and outraged laughter of a generation that dared to join hands and dance with its parents' worst nightmares, all on the bloody brink where we happen to have been born.

That's not a bad start, do you think? And when you see "Swamp Thing," I hope you'll agree that's exactly what it is: just the beginning.

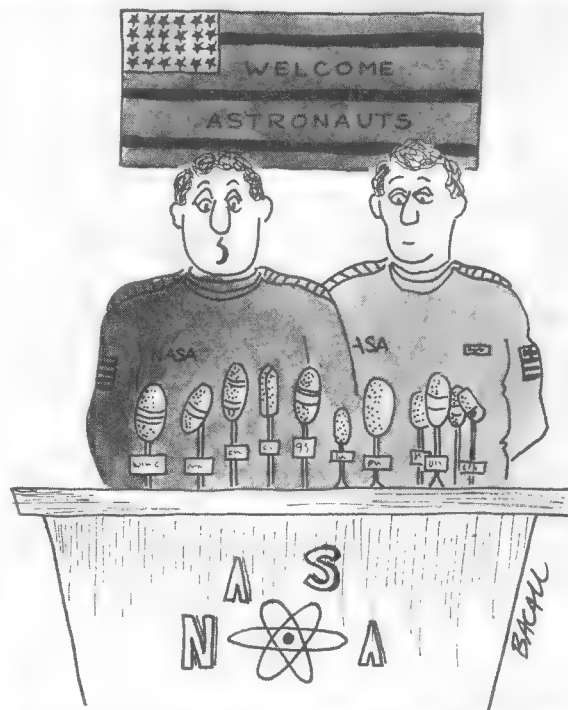
Sincerely,
Wes Craven



TZ FOREVER

We are always coming across references to "the Twilight Zone" in newspapers and magazines, and invite readers to send us interesting examples.

This month's item comes from the *San Francisco Chronicle* of January 31, courtesy reader Jim Aschbacher.



"We have just returned from a month-long space flight and we can report that there is a dimension beyond that which is known to man. It is a dimension as vast as space and as timeless as infinity. It is the middle ground between light and shadow, between man's grasp and his reach. It is an area which we call *The Twilight Zone*."

REQUIRED READING

"So far as I can see, Blackwood's *The Willows* is the greatest weird story ever written, with Machen's *The White People* as a close second, and with things like Shiel's *House of Sounds*, Machen's *Black Seal* and *White Powder*, Chambers' *Yellow Sign*, Poe's *House of Usher*, and James's *Count Magnus* as good runners-up."

—H.P. Lovecraft to
Wilfred Blach Talman,
November 10, 1936

STRAUB ON SF

"As a kid I was interested in science fiction, but now I can't read anything where the people have funny names, or 'Erthor got up in the morning and put on his Illiath and walked out to the plains of Gimm.' I look at the stuff and think, 'Jesus, that's easy, anybody can do that.'"

—Peter Straub,
interviewed by Tom
Geddie in the March
Fantasy Newsletter

CALLING ALL CARTOONISTS

Got a gag that's also ghostly, weird, supernatural, futuristic, or just plain other-dimensional? *Twilight Zone* is now featuring cartoons (as you can see by this page), and we'll pay \$50 for each one we use. Send submissions, enclosing an SASE, to Cartoon Editor, TZ Publications, 800 Second Avenue, New York, NY 10017.



SEARCHING FOR THE GREATEST BATTER IN BASEBALL HISTORY,
HE DISCOVERED THE DREADFUL SECRET OF . . .

Browning's Lamps

by David Nemec

In January of 1974, a writer named Howard Gammill was interviewing Goober Talbot, the old outfielder, in a hotel room in New York. This is not really the beginning of the story, but it was Gammill's first inkling there might *be* a story. More of one, anyway, than Talbot could tell him.

Talbot had once led the National League in batting, but that had been during the Second World War when most of the better hitters were in uniform; in later years Talbot had trouble hanging on as a mere pinch hitter. Unlike most of the old-timers Gammill had interviewed over the winter, Talbot bore no grudge toward baseball. "Ol' country boy like the Goob," Talbot kept saying between nips at the pint of rye in his lap, "jes glad he got to play up top as long as he did." He reposed on the bed, his shirt unbuttoned to the waist, his feet up, eyeing the tape recorder as if he had never seen one before. He was a fat, nearly toothless hulk who bore no resemblance to the cherub face that had once adorned bubblegum cards. *No more than sixty*, Gammill thought, *and already he's fallen apart; sad the way these guys let themselves go when they're done playing.*

Gammill's book would be called *Day of Gold*. Each of the former players Gammill was interviewing had performed a single, solitary super feat during an otherwise mediocre career. Gammill didn't much care for the book's title or the idea behind it, but his editor was convinced there was another book or two to be mined from the lode Kahn's *The Boys of*

Summer had uncovered a few years back. Gammill's last literary endeavor had been a string of folksy interviews with a dozen pitchers who had faced both Cobb and the Babe. It had sold fifty thousand copies and brought him some recognition—but not the kind the men in his book had enjoyed in their day; that would forever be beyond Gammill's reach. Talbot could look back on his former glory—the batting title, fluke that it was, still put him in the limelight for a few moments now and then. Gammill's book would provide yet another such moment for Talbot, and he seemed grateful for it. Some of the others—Hunnefield, the pitcher who'd lost a Series no-hitter on a broken-bat single, for one—wouldn't agree to come to New York, though all their expenses would be paid and they'd get a grand or two besides. To talk to Hunnefield, Gammill had to make a hideous bus trip from the Miami airport to a sugar mill town in the Florida interior. Even then Hunnefield, now a foreman at the mill, wanted Gammill to find him a job in baseball as his price for talking, and when Gammill couldn't promise this, the interview dissolved into a blast at the game: *a ruthless business*. Can't find room for an old star, but willy-nilly pays millions to kids fresh out of Little League who don't even know how to hold a runner on first base . . .

Gammill was thirty-five in 1974 and still in reasonably good condition. In college he'd once gone three-for-four against a pitcher who later won twenty games for the Red Sox. It was his own personal day of gold. And he wanted to believe that he could

Browning's Lamps

have hit in the major leagues if he'd had the chance. Oh, maybe not .300, but at least a solid .270 or .280. Earlier in the winter he'd let this fantasy slip out while interviewing Gusty Gayles, whose twenty-nine saves in 1953 still held a Cardinal record, and Gayles had laconically said, "Try .080," and then led him into a field back of the Gayleses' homestead. It had been a raw day in November and Gammill had worried about the bat stinging his hands when it made contact, but Gayles, at fifty-four, still had a slider that was so wicked, Gammill had all he could do to scratch out a couple of weak ground balls.

That, rationally, should have been the end of it. The sensible man would have resigned himself to writing about baseball, realizing that was about as close as he could ever hope to come to the game, but Gammill knew that for him there could be no easy end to the dream. The five-year-old who had stood up in front of his kindergarten class and announced he was going to be a ballplayer had become a thirty-five-year-old who would gladly trade all the glowing reviews that *Day of Gold* would bring to see his name, just once, in a major league box score. So he made up his mind to get into something else as soon as he finished the book. Talking to men like Talbot only rubbed salt where the skin was still too thin. He was worried that Talbot could sense this. That was perhaps why Talbot kept gloating, "A man that's played in the big leagues, he's done something proud."

"No regrets?" Gammill said.

"Exceptin' maybe that the Goob ain't around for this designated hitter gimmick. Ol' Goob coulda had another bat title, he didn't have to go out to the field and make a clown of hisself."

"You did all right all those years as a pinch hitter."

"Once a game. That was all the Goob could swing. Shoot, hardly enough to get the blood warm."

"Who do you think the best pinch hitter you ever saw was? Besides yourself, of course."

In bringing the pint bottle up to his mouth, Talbot paused to wag his head self-effacingly. "The best? Naw, that wadn't ol' Goob. Goob was good all right, but there was better."

"For instance?"

"Waahl, guy down in one of those cotton-pickin' leagues ol' Goob played in when he was no more'n a taddy. Guy you prob'ly never heard of. Pless. Pinch Pless, they called him. Worst glove ever, couldn't catch a pea in a bushel basket. Made ol' Goob look like DiMaggio out there in the pasture—but stick a bat in his hand, man, that sucker coulda hit a apple seed blowed off a barn roof."

In such ways do writers learn there are stories better than the one they are telling. Listening to the

tape of the interview later, Gammill heard the catch in his voice when he asked, "What league was this, do you remember?"

"Somewheres down there in 'Bama or Kentucky. Maybe Tennysee. Played in those dogpatch leagues a lotta years before the Phils took attention that ol' Goob was always good for his .350. You oughta look up the Goob's complete record sometime. It wadn't jes those eight years in the majors."

But Gammill wasn't interested in the Goob any longer. Somewhere, in one of his talks with the old pitchers, he seemed to recall the mention of Pless, a few seconds on the order of "... toughest hitter I ever faced, tougher even than Cobb, was back in the bushes. Little tubby guy named Pless. Never even made it up to A ball, from what I remember, because there was no place he could play in the field where he wouldn't kill himself. But Christ! Best pure hitter you ever saw!" Gammill hadn't even included this bit of memorabilia in his book, or rather he had, simply recording everything verbatim and then letting his editor weed out what didn't seem of interest. He'd been very lazy in his approach to that book, and he'd been going along about half asleep on this one, too. But he was waking up; the second reference to Pless triggered a nerve at the back of his mind.

He wondered if Talbot remembered the exact year he'd played against this Pless. Talbot thought it was the early thirties, after taking a moment to gaze at the ceiling as if calculating something. His true age, probably, as opposed to his baseball age.

"Say '31 or so?" Gammill heard his own voice on the tape straining to sound mild.

"A while before the war, anyway," Talbot said. He sounded tired. Small wonder—the pint bottle had been empty by then, and he'd dragged his suitcase from under the bed, looking for another. Getting off the bed to shake hands when Gammill was leaving proved embarrassing to both of them.

The next morning Gammill ran through his taped talks with the old pitchers until he found the one he wanted. The description of Pless was about as he'd remembered it, and there was an odd lilt in the pitcher's voice, as if the memory brought him pleasure. Every player wanted to believe he'd been up against the best at some point, so perhaps this Pless really was something. Still, Gammill was prepared for a disappointment when he started digging through old *Baseball Guides*. It was too hard to believe Pless could have been much good and still been buried all those years in the lower minors. Gammill was browsing through the final averages for the Smokey Mountain States League in the 1932 edition when he came across Pless for the first time. Pless was listed by his full

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name, as was the *Guide's* custom: "Pless, Walker B." Scanning the page, he took in Pless's statistics unbelievably; in 108 at bats Pless had accumulated forty-nine base hits and fourteen homers. In the entire league only one other player, someone named Rice who'd batted over 400 times, had more homers and no one was within a hundred points of Pless's .454 average. Delving farther back, he discovered in 1928 Pless had hit an astounding .483 with twenty-six homers in less than 200 at bats. Over the course of that season Pless had managed to play enough games in the outfield to have his fielding average listed too; it was actually lower than his batting average and looked so absurd—thirty-five errors and only twenty-eight put outs—that Gammill would have been sure it was a misprint if he hadn't recalled Talbot's "... couldn't catch a pea in a bushel basket."

He picked up a paper and pencil and began making columns of Pless's batting achievements, going all the way back to 1921. When he had finished he caught his breath. Pless had an average in organized baseball of .447 and once had led the Bluegrass League in homers and triples despite having fewer than 100 at bats. His incompetence in the field had kept him from ever moving out of the lower minors, apparently. It was a different game then. No club wanted only half a player. Smead Jolley, who hit a ton everywhere he went, was ultimately squeezed out of the majors because of his fielding mishaps, and the Cubs had once dropped a player named Babe Twombly after he hit .377. You still had to wonder, though, if there weren't more to the story: a drinking problem, or perhaps some bizarre physical defect like that Pete Gray who'd played with only one arm.

Gammill placed an ad in *The Sporting News*, requesting anyone with knowledge of the whereabouts of Walker B. Pless, nicknamed "Pinch," former minor league slugger, to write to him. For a month after the ad ran, he checked his mail each day but without any real hope anything would come of it: Pless had played too long ago; he'd probably been dead for years. One morning, however, an envelope came, bearing a postmark that, near as Gammill could make out, was of a town in Kentucky that began with "G." In the envelope was a single sheet of cheap tablet paper with a few pencil-scrawled lines on it. The gist seemed to be that the writer had once been a teammate of Pless's. "You ever get down to Gloam," Gammill was told, "just come around the general store in the day." The signature was unreadable, and there was no return address. Gammill found Gloam in the atlas; it was about a hundred miles south of Louisville, which meant another miserable bus ride, and on top of it the expenses for the trip would have to come out of his own pocket. What could he tell his editor? "Nobody wants to read about a guy who never even made it out of Class C," the editor would say.

He got to Gloam late on a Wednesday afternoon. The writer in him tried to feel on the verge of a story, but the dryness and shaking in his hands felt more like the day he'd gone into the field with Gusty Gayles. Gloam had three stores and he started with the one that looked the least prosperous, following the principle that had carried him through most of his literary enterprises: when in doubt as to which way to point your nose, seek the smell of failure.

An old man in a flannel shirt was behind the counter. Gammill watched him a while from the doorway. There were several customers in the store, but the man paid little attention to them. His eyes seemed to be focused on something in his mind. He had a frail, wizened, stooped profile—nothing about it to suggest an erstwhile ballplayer. Still, Gammill sensed that this was his man. Nearly all the ex-ballplayers he had interviewed had those turned-inward eyes, as if the only events that mattered were memories. He approached the counter with the letter in his hand. The man's eyes remained out in space. Gammill saw that the flesh on his face and neck hung in loose folds, as if it had once encased the head of a much heavier man, and he knew then ("... little tubby guy") that he was, in all probability, looking at Pless himself.

He stood at the counter, waiting for the man to focus his eyes on the present. After the better part of a minute the man turned and started to move off. So there was nothing for Gammill to do but speak. "Mr. Pless? Walker Pless?"

For an instant the man appeared to be startled. Then Gammill saw his shoulders steady and

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straighten, a movement that Gammill took to mean he would not be caught out so easily. "Who're you?" the man said flatly.

"Howard Gammill." Gammill held out the letter. "It said I'd find you in the general store."

"Lemme look." The man took the letter, pressed it flat on the counter, then stood well back as if he needed the extra distance to see. "Uh huh ... I remember this. Thing in *The Sporting News* said if anybody knew Pless. I knew Pless."

"Matter of fact," Gammill said matter of factly, "you are Pless, aren't you?"

The man laughed in a short, humorless way, as if he were being polite. "People hereabouts call me Carter. Joe Carter."

"But you played as Walker Pless." If Gammill had learned anything as a writer, it was how to persist.

The man laughed again and shrugged slightly. "When I played as anybody."

"Look, I just want"—Gammill shot a sharp glance over his shoulder—"I mean, can we go someplace where we can be alone?" he said more quietly.

"Here's good enough."

"All right, then, what I want to do is talk to you about your tremendous hitting ability. I mean you had some of the highest averages in the entire history of baseball." He was conscious that Pless's eyes were fixing on him now. "There'll be some money in it, of course. Several hundred dollars."

"Don't care about money. Store brings all I need."

That was either a lie or else Pless had the skimpiest needs humanly possible. "Well, will you agree to just talk to me, then?"

"It's what we're doing." Dry as Pless's words were, his tone held no hint of irony. Everything was being said in the same flat voice.

"The question in my mind is why you never made it out of Class C. It must have made you a little bitter to post those fantastic averages year after year and never move up."

"No place I could move. There wasn't such a thing in those days as a man could just pinch-hit. Johnny Fredrick, Red Lucas, Sheriff Harris—they all had a position to play."

"How was it that you were such a terrible fielder? It would seem you could have learned, like you learned to hit."

"Nothing to learn there. Hitting came natural. Playing in the field, running them bases, just couldn't ever pick it up. Tried, hell—Christ, did I try, but it wouldn't come."

"Tot Pressler said you were the toughest batter he ever pitched to. Even tougher than Cobb."

"They'd say the same thing now, I was play-

ing. Nobody around could get me out steady. Getting down to first base, though, that'd be something else. I'd have to hit it out to the wall even to get a single."

"You're telling me you could still hit?"

"For damn sure. Maybe nothing what I did when I was younger and had more shoulder, but near .300 anyway."

Gammill had heard things like this before from other old-timers, outrageous protestations that even at seventy they could play the game as well as the kids. Usually he had to restrain himself from grinning, but now he felt his whole body undergo a peculiar tightening. Pless's eyes held a dark and steady light in their centers. The rest of the man looked ordinary, even a little below ordinary; his shoulders drooped so much they almost touched the counter, and his pipe-stem arms didn't look strong enough to hold a bat, much less swing one. But those eyes looked as if they might contain something special. "Hornsby always used to make claims like that," Gammill said invitingly.

"Hornsby was good, but I was better. Still am."

"Come on. You must be over seventy. You mean to tell me you could hit Ryan, Seaver, all those hard-throwing kids they have now?"

"Satch Paige threw as hard as any of 'em. Two years ago he came through here and I had a little get-together with him out on the high school field." Pless's mouth made an effort to smile naturally, but it escaped into an old man's nervous quivering of the lips. "About five pitches, Satch gave up. 'Never could get one by you,' he said; 'never will.'"

"Paige must be nearly seventy himself."

"Still throws mean, though. Legs ain't there to give him much follow-through, but the ball still comes."

They had arrived at a juncture where Gammill could no longer deny his motives for coming there. Still, he had to pretend, if only to himself, that he wasn't taking any of this seriously. *I'm not from Missouri, Mr. Pless, but you're still going to have to show me* was the sort of thing he wanted to say, light but to the point. Instead he found himself coming out with it like a kid would, as a challenge. Pless irritated him, under all; it was that damn could-not-care-less attitude, as if he knew how helplessly Gammill was his captive.

"I'm not Paige," Gammill said, "but I still remember how to throw what used to be a pretty fair nickel curve. Go you any amount from a beer to the price of a month's supplies for your store, that you can't hit anything off me but air."

Pless could easily have laughed this off, but Gammill had begun to sense that the man, for his own reasons, was a captive here no less than he.



"Not much good light left," Pless said. "Don't get dark till around six, but the old windows never did like them shadows. So you get back here in under a hour with your gear, and maybe we'll have us time for a few swings."

"I'm ready now. My glove's in the car, along with a bat and a couple of balls."

"Need more'n a couple. Field here's got a crick running back of right field. Good lefty batter's gonna hit a few out in it. Can't be helped."

"I'll take my chances."

"Waste of time, two balls. Nobody out there shagging, they'll roll in the crick first two swings. You get yourself down to the sporting goods, get a good dozen or so. Maybe dig up a kid to chase. Meet me out to the field in a hour."

Two boys were on the high school field knocking flies when Gammill got there. For a coin or two they probably would have agreed to shag for him, but instead he gave them each five dollars to go home. Whatever was going to happen here, he wanted no witnesses to it. Besides, the creek, at a glance, looked about four hundred feet from the plate. He sat on the grass beside the backstop, waiting for Pless to come along. In his lap was a Louisville Slugger, Hank Aaron model, and a gloveful of new balls, American League, Joe Cronin's signature on them. Pless didn't get there until after five o'clock; he took a squint at the sun down low behind third base and said, "Got about ten pretty fair minutes. Couldn't find no shaggers, eh? Well, get yourself ready to do some chasing out yonder."

Pless was wearing the same flannel shirt and trousers he had on in the store. Other than rolling up his sleeves, he made no preparations. He merely picked up the Aaron bat, hefted it two or three times, then shambled toward the plate.

"Stick okay?" Gammill said. He had rather expected Pless to bring his own bat and himself to have to go through some shenanigans to check that it wasn't loaded or coated with nails or some such thing.

"It's wood, ain't it?" Pless was setting himself in the open stance of a slugger. On him, though, with the stick arms and baggy clothes, it looked like a scarecrow turned sideways.

Gammill would have liked a few warm up pitches, mainly to make certain of his control so he wouldn't bean Pless, but he felt ridiculous not being ready when Pless, more than twice his age, obviously was. Looked impatient, in fact. He kept hefting the bat, then stepping out of the box to rub his eyes and take a fresh squint toward third base with them while Gammill toyed with the mound.

Satisfied at last with the footing, Gammill went into a perfunctory windup and delivered a medium-range fastball belt high. Pless's eyes seemed to bug out of his head and his arms to quiver like jelly before he managed to launch the bat in a kind of schoolgirl swing, but the result so stunned Gammill that he felt his own eyes widen to their full size. The noise—bat against ball—made his eardrums tingle, and peeling his head over his shoulder, he was just in time to see a hectic blur ripple the underbrush that separated the creek from the outfield.

"'Lean on the cripples,' mama always said," Pless called humorlessly.

Gammill stood still as ice, frozen in the thought that he was in the dream of his life. To make sure it could not be punctured he started a more elaborate windup, resolved to let his arm all out on the next pitch, but Pless was out of the box again. Doing some more eye rubbing. Then Pless hopped back in, and he was cocking his wrist to break off a vicious curve.

The ball snapped sharply down and toward Pless's knees. It wasn't a major league pitch, but it didn't miss being one by much. Most batters would have let it go by as slim pickings, taken the strike. Pless took a stuttery step toward first base, though, and golfed it down the line, a man-sized double in any league.

The next pitch, on the outside corner, was sent on a line to dead center, and the fourth, fifth, and sixth were scattered to the deepest parts of the outfield, missing the creek only because they were not pulled quite hard enough.

"Ain't getting around on you a'tall. Old shoulders don't have that good snap no more." Pless sounded almost apologetic.

Gammill had two balls left; he would soon have to do some retrieving. The first hit, in the creek, was definitely gone, and some of the others might not be found either. He had only brought half a dozen more

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balls, despite Pless's injunction. His breath was coming nearly as hard as Pless's now, though not because of any physical effort. He was in a state of tremendous excitement and unbelief. He watched Pless hold the bat between his knees while he dug at the corners of his eyes. Pless had done this same routine now before each pitch. It could have been only an old ritual Pless had picked up, a habit like Harry Walker's taking his cap off and putting it on again or Rocky Colavito's stretching the bat behind his back to flex his shoulders, but it could have had other meanings. Maybe Pless didn't believe what he was seeing, either.

Gammill tossed the ball idly in his hand, but his mind was not idle. "Lights going on you, Pless?" he said finally. The man had taken an especially long time since the last pitch.

"Dust in the old windows," Pless muttered. He took a handkerchief out of his pocket and shook it out in a vastly exaggerated gesture. Gammill had the distinct impression that this was all part of a show to get him to ask the question that had been crabbing away in his brain for the past several minutes.

"What would happen if you didn't rub your eyes? If you just got in there and hit?"

Pless put the handkerchief away and squared himself at the plate again, as if he hadn't heard. Perhaps he really hadn't, or hadn't wanted to.

"What about it, Pless? You putting some kind of trick drops in them or something?"

For an instant, only the barest instant, Pless's shoulders jerked, and Gammill remembered in the store when the man had been caught off guard. Only out here it seemed he was acting as if he wanted to be caught. Gammill felt a tremor of recognition across the back of his own shoulders as it occurred to him that the events in the store might have been staged, too. He had been meant to see quickly through the play-role of Joe Carter, slothful storekeeper. Now he was intended to see that Pless had a secret to hitting. Those eyes were it. In them, somewhere. There'd been Ted Williams with his 20-10 vision, so acute he never swung at a pitch that was so much as a hair out of the strike zone. Pless's eyes looked to be even keener, for distances anyway. In the store Gammill recalled how Pless had held the letter well away from him to see it. An old man's eyes, when it came to reading. Or perhaps that too had been an affectation. Gammill was beginning to arrive at the notion that Pless could actually read Cronin's signature on each ball before he swung at it. If he could read at all. If he had ever learned how. Goober Talbot recognized his favorite brand of rye by the picture on the label, and Pless didn't look much swifter in the head department. By God, though, with Pless's ability to hit, even a cretin could make the majors these days. Gammill himself would

become a Hall of Famer. He understood now the foolishness of the hope that had brought him here. He had wanted to divine the secret of Pless's wizardry with a bat and acquire it for himself. But the secret wasn't anything that could be told. It was a gift, Gammill was convinced, a gift of vision, and there was no way he could acquire that.

And then, as it happened, there suddenly was a way. Pless, in swinging at the next pitch, went down in a heap beside the plate and lay very still. The ball squibbed off his bat along the ground toward Gammill, who followed its course a moment or two before he observed that Pless had fallen. Racing to the plate, he found Pless's eyes open and blinking but the rest of his face gone awry, as if he had been struck in the head—clubbed from behind. Gammill had seen this once before on the ballfield; in 1948, as a nine-year-old, he had watched Don Black, of the Indians, topple after swinging hard at a pitch, the victim of a cerebral hemorrhage. Bending over Pless, he asked if he could be heard. When Pless only blinked some more, he shouted he was going for a doctor and ran for his car.

In the hospital the improbable fragments that had been shaken loose and stirred amok all those weeks ago in that New York hotel room tumbled at last into the mosaic of a firm and final plan. Pless was diagnosed as having sustained a massive stroke and put under around-the-clock observation. According to the doctors, he might pull through but more likely he wouldn't; in any case, he would never again be more than basket material. All this Gammill was told after identifying himself as Pless's nephew. He was taking a risk that Pless had no other living relatives, or at least none who cared enough to impede step one of the Gammill Coup. Around midnight, left alone briefly with Pless, he got a pen into the man's putty-jointed fingers and sat beside the bed, pretending to doze while he waited for the nurse to return. On the bed sheet, within reach of Pless's hand, was a single spidery line of scrawl: "I leave my body to my nephew, Howard Gammill, to do with as he wishes." Pless's signature was even more wispy than the will itself, and Gammill trusted no one would examine it too closely, for he had started to write *Pinch* before catching himself and scratching *Walker* over it.

No one wondered unduly long how Pless had managed to eke out a will although pretty much paralyzed, but a few days later, when Pless fell into a coma that spelled the end, Gammill's request that Pless's eyes be transplanted into his own head got some odd looks and an argument. What did a young man with quite serviceable vision want with the eyes of a bummy cabbage-head? Gammill produced a tale of hereditary blindness at age forty, noting that

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Pless alone of the males in his family had been spared the dread affliction. All the doctors Gammill spoke to had the same reaction. To a man, they did not want the responsibility for any operation such as Gammill was suggesting. One eye—well, perhaps, but never both. There was Holzapple, though, up in Louisville, an ophthalmological renegade who'd put his mother's eyes in a mole for the sake of experiment.

Gammill found Holzapple to be much older than he'd anticipated. Close to Pless's age, in fact, with hair growing out of his ears and indeed out of the edges of every orifice except his eyeballs. These listened intently to Gammill and then appeared to blur with doubt.

"Why not just swap the corneas? Be much safer. Corneas I can do just like putting in a new windowpane."

"The whole eyeball," Gammill said. "It has to be. The disease affects the retinas."

"Oddest thing I ever heard. Only attacks the males, you say?"

Gammill was afraid Holzapple would continue to probe until the story was shown up for the sham that it was, but Holzapple stopped short of that. He seemed willing to allow Gammill his lie if Gammill in return would sign a waiver releasing him of all culpability in the event the operation failed. Gammill's plan had included a clause that he would get his own eyes back if Pless's didn't work out. They could be stored somewhere, couldn't they, while the results of the operation were awaited? No such luck, Holzapple said. There was no going back; the tissues wouldn't absorb further surgery for weeks afterward, and in the meantime Gammill's eyes would be worthless. As yet, human organs weren't like spare auto parts that could be kept on the shelf until needed.

Hearing all this, Gammill suffered a violent qualm, but it passed in the glaze of remembering Pless's artistry with a bat. The chance that those seventy-odd-year-old eyes in his thirtyish body could make him overnight into a Rod Carew ... the mere

chance! That they could also reduce him to a walker of guide dogs, a totter of tin cups was swept quickly out of mind by a picture of himself in a major league uniform. And the voices of sportscasters all across the country saying, "Howard Gammill, oldest Rookie-of-the-Year ever, at thirty-five, four times a batting title winner, today was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in a landslide vote. Gammill, who compiled a .386 lifetime average in his brief but incredible career ... " Later for the stuff of dreams. For now, it was enough that he had a shot at making them come true. He signed the waiver, entered the one hospital in Louisville that still granted the controversial Holzapple surgical privileges under the name of Harold Traynor (getting a kick out of the fact that no one on the staff recognized the real monicker of the immortal Pie) and as a show of faith gave his own eyes to a teenage girl who had blown her face apart with a can of hair spray.

Coming to consciousness after the operation, Gammill found his entire head swathed in bandages and wished only to sleep until the day they could be removed. Thus he swallowed voraciously all the Valiums and Darvons he was given and sought extras from his fellow patients, bargaining away dishes of rice pudding, slabs of steak, occasionally slipping a bill or two into a hand that could not see what it was getting any more than his own could see what it was giving.

Days passed so. On one of them Gammill turned his face toward what he was told was the window and tried to see through the bandages. It was his only moment of impatience. The afternoon Holzapple announced they'd try a test or two was a murky one. Anyway, that was how it looked when Gammill unsealed his new eyes and took a glance into space. There wasn't much of it—that was his first impression, and his second was that his room must be underwater. A lot of fishy items were out there swimming around, some of them so close he could have reached out and grabbed them, if he'd been able to locate his hand when he looked down where it used to be. In its place was a wad of fuzz, and another was off to his left talking to him in Holzapple's voice.

"See anything, Gammill?"

"The bottom of a rain barrel."

"Excellent. Most transplants come up blank."

"Now you tell me."

Gammill waited for Holzapple to tell him that his sight would get better. Holzapple didn't. The bandages went on again, and the day following Gammill saw the same spectrum of murk. A moment occurred, however, when it lifted and the world he remembered emerged as if from behind a curtain. He felt reborn, in a way. Certainly not the same man.

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Holzapple predicted there'd be other such moments of clarity, and that one day they'd begin outnumbering the periods of murk. As soon as the riot in his vitreouses ran its course.

In late May there came a morning when the bandages came off and stayed off. The eyes were still bloodshot and more blurry than not, but Gammill did not feel he could wait any longer before conducting a few vital tests of his own on them. One in particular. He chose an interval when he was unobserved, closed his right eye and lifted a finger to the corner of his left. He could not rub hard, the flesh there was still too tender for that, but he did get in a few light swipes before a throbbing started.

The throbbing was severe enough to make him blink, but he would have blinked anyway. He couldn't have helped himself. For what he saw over the next few moments nearly stopped his heart. His left eye was fixed on the nurse where she stood at the window arranging the blind to let in the morning light. At first everything that occurred seemed in the realm of the ordinary—her back arched and her hand closed on the cord, tugging to secure it. But as she turned from the window, matters started to get weird. She looked as if she was having trouble bringing her head around; and yet—no, it wasn't just her head, it was all of her body. None of her movements looked right; they were the right movements, and in their natural order, but something about them was way off. Gammill's hand went to his eye reflexively to rub some more, then dropped with astonishment to his side as what was happening dawned on him. The nurse was moving as if she had been put into slow motion! It was taking her forever just to get away from the window and cross the room to his bed.

In another moment, however, she seemed to be running at him, and then she was there. "What's wrong, Mr. Traynor? Are you all right?"

"Fine. Never better." He ought to repeat the process immediately so he would know he hadn't imagined it, but the nurse wouldn't stop hovering over him.

"You look so pale, and your eye—why is it closed like that? Does it hurt?"

It was his left eye that was closed now, against what it had seen. The right one was moving around the room a little wildly, for it was his now: the secret, the trick to hitting .400. To hitting 1.000 if he wanted to be gluttonous about it! Jim Palmer's curves would have no more menace than clots of cotton candy. Wilhelm's knucklers might never reach the plate in this millennium.

"Nothing hurts. I feel great. It's just being here. I'm getting edgy."

Holzapple released him from the hospital at the end of the week. By then he'd learned that the rub-

bing stunt worked equally well on both eyes, and that no matter how hard he rubbed, the slo-mo phenomenon lasted at most only a few seconds. All of this was knowledge gained under indoor conditions, lying flat on his back in bed. Out of doors remained an unknown until he hit the street. There, with the hospital looming behind him, he stood on the corner waiting for the traffic light to change. When it seemed to be taking too long, he realized what he had done. In stepping out of the hospital into the dazzling sunshine, he had performed by instinct some brushing of the eyes to protect them. It could be brought about quite by accident, then. He wondered what other quirks he had yet to discover. Refining his act was undoubtedly going to take a while. Not terribly long, though, he hoped, because the baseball season was already well underway and he'd have to debut soon to have any chance at Rookie-of-the-Year.

In his musing he had missed the light change. No problem. A pass at his eyes and approaching cars were reduced to the pace of giant snails. He stepped off the curb and started across. In a moment he was reeling backwards, lunging for the curb again. His legs, walking, weren't carrying him anywhere near as fast as the cars. In bed he'd had no occasion to notice how his own movements slowed to correspond to the world around him. A whole world of snails and himself one of them. A world of time interrupted, if only for a few moments here and there. It was all illusory, but then, what wasn't?

Tinkering with something cosmic was what he was doing. Pless had done it for years, and nothing untoward had happened to him, except your standard old man's graceless death. One thing he had done some stopping to think on while in the hospital was how Pless had come into possession of these eyes. Perhaps witchcraft was behind them. How else to explain the similarity in method between summoning their magic and the genie in Aladdin's lamp? With that strangely thrilling conviction, Gammill hailed a cab and went directly to the airport, rehearsing the sick-relative story he would spring on his editor to account for the long silence from his typewriter.

The Indians, going nowhere as usual, let him travel with their club while he supposedly worked on a baseball version of Plimpton's *Paper Lion*. The players ribbed him mercilessly and kept suggesting such titles as *Wooden Indian*. His editor had made a deal with the Cleveland management whereby he would be put on the active roster after the twenty-five-man limit was lifted on September 1, and thrown into a game or two as a pinch runner. The prospect of putting him up to bat, though, was nigh onto nonexistent. The game was



still smarting from Veeck's use of a midget years ago and wanted no more sideshow ventures, even under the catch-all guise of literature.

That, on short notice, was the best Gammill's editor had been able to do for him and then only under enormous prodding. In his professional view he gave a very low value to the theory about Gammill's needing an insider's look at the game before he could make *Day of Gold* credible, especially since rival publishing outfits were coming out with baseball books all the time by poets and feminist journalists who had no more idea that "hit-and-run" in baseball parlance was not a criminal offense, than they did that a steel cup was not for drinking but an item of protective apparel. "The trouble with Bouton, Brosnan, and the rest of them," Gammill said, "was they were really company men at bottom. If you thought they made feathers fly, put me in the clubhouse for a few weeks and you'll see the real lowdown on what makes a bunch of men run around in pajamas."

Gammill actually took no notes at all, though he did make a display of hanging around a lot and nodding wisely to himself each time one of the subs uttered in his earshot some *bon mot* about the game. The Indians' manager meanwhile ignored him, as did most of the regulars. From time to time, however, one of the rookie pitchers, a lefty named Tybender, came out to the park early in the morning and threw a few minutes of batting practice to him in return for some tutoring in the art of writing. Tybender was keeping a diary of his first season and hoped to become a novelist when his playing days were over. That could be soon, for pitching to Gammill began invidiously to undermine his confidence. At the outset Gammill limited his eye gimmick to one or two pitches a session, but gradually he stepped up the tempo until he was smothering the rookie's best offerings effortlessly out of the park. Word of Gam-

mill's unlikely prowess in due order reached the Indians' third-base coach, who lurked in a corner of the dugout one morning, pretending interest in the bat racks. Both Gammill and the rookie knew he was there, and both were nervous. The rookie, thinking he was on trial, blazed his first pitch high and tight, and Gammill, having decided to take a straight look at a toss or two before going into his eye-throttling routine, narrowly missed decapitation.

Tybender next served a curve that started in on Gammill's hands and broke like a comet at the last instant over the inside corner. That, at least, was how the pitch might have appeared to the coach. To Gammill's genie-invoked eyes it was a moon on a platter, and he hit it into the upper deck.

A groan escaped Tybender, and in the dugout there was a clatter. Glancing over his shoulder, Gammill saw a bench had fallen and the coach was now up on the steps.

Mixing frequent cap adjustments with the cleansing of perspiration from his brow, he kept time on the field in a state of near perpetual suspension while he rattled balls off the fences like buckshot. He was careful not to overstimulate the coach, sometimes deliberately missing pitches he could easily have clobbered. Once he even switched for a few moments to batting righthanded and looked foolish. The coach was meant to believe he was treating the outing as pure fun and that he took nothing he did too seriously. Like an aspiring film actor, he must not toot his own horn but let the director discover him on his own. He finished the workout with a shot over the center field fence that struck at the base of the bleachers, territory no Indian had reached in years. Locked into downshifted motion still, and a little dizzy, he turned from the plate to amble toward the dugout. The coach was creeping out on the field to greet him, arms waving like windmills on a breezeless day. The coach's words tumbled out at normal speed, though. Sounds, oddly, were not affected in the slightest.

"Pretty fair stroke there, Gammill, for a guy sits behind a typewriter all day. Stick around. Maybe Klosterman will chuck a few to you when he comes out to do some photos for *Sport*."

Klosterman was the team's ace, a righty fireballer who already had nine wins despite it being only June. The closest thing to Feller since Feller himself. "Well, I don't know if I'm up to anything like that," Gammill said. "My God, I'm just out for a little exercise."

Self-efface at every opportunity. Overdo, if necessary. What a clod the coach was. Could barely keep from choking on the wad of chewing tobacco in his cheek over what he'd seen, but still trying to play it coy. As Gammill watched, the man's coma ended and the arm gyrations quickened. That was the way

Browning's Lamps

it went, one instant the world spinning in turtle time and then everything back to its usual pell-mell self.

"Your life insurance is paid up," the coach said, directing a stream of tobacco juice at a point midway between his feet and Gammill's. "Besides, Klostie needs some work on his breaking stuff against lefties."

The coach was getting intrigued by him. When he'd pounded Klosterman around, the manager would be next. The Indians desperately lacked a reliable designated hitter. They lacked at a number of other positions, too, but Gammill's fantasies did not extend to filling any of them. In the field he'd discovered, as Pless must have, that slowing down the flight of a ball hit his way did not help much; he was missing the instinct and the footspeed necessary to get him to where it was going. On the other hand, standing stationary in the batter's box, lining himself up to tee off on an object rendered almost ponderous, was a matter he could have mastered in his sleep. Well, actually not. The eye gimmick would not work in the dark or under artificial light: Gammill did not know why that was. It seemed to have something to do with the sun; on a cloudy day, for example, he couldn't get his eyes focused clearly. He remembered Pless's obsession that there be good light for batting and his continual squinting into the setting sun, which he had regarded at the time as part of the act. Of late he had begun feeling unaccountable impulses to gaze into the sun himself. The brighter it was, the more he was drawn to it. Thus far he had refrained from indulging those urges. The sun was dangerous to the naked eye; moreover, things that did not . . . *belong* sometimes materialized if he were out in it too long. There had been those queer ads for toothpowder and chewing tobacco on the outfield wall a few days ago; and just this morning Tybender had been wearing a baggy uniform of a style that had been the norm in Goober Talbot's day.

Klosterman finished his photography session with *Sport* shortly after eleven. He held no great interest in Gammill but agreed to toss a few pitches to him in lieu of his normal workout the day before a scheduled starting assignment. Gammill pretended to shake in his shoes as he stepped up to the plate, to be playing the clown. He settled in, the bat resting on his left shoulder. Directly overhead the sun glared, nearing noonday intensity. Behind him the coach hunkered in the dugout; a few other players, subs out early for a little extra practice, took up positions on the field. Falling in with Gammill's mock festive spirit, one of them stationed himself at shortstop with a catcher's mitt, and another trotted out to first base wearing his cap backwards. This man went flying heels over head

when Gammill's first swing caromed a liner at him so hot it tore the glove off his hand.

"Better bear down, Klostie; get a man killed out here," someone shouted. Unobtrusively Klosterman dug a deeper foothold for himself at the edge of the rubber. Gammill peered at his obdurate, arrogant profile, trapped in the throes of time half-frozen. Suddenly the profile seemed to grow in size, to move closer, and over its shoulder Gammill saw the shortstop was now playing barehanded. Craning his head judiciously to the right, he watched the man on first smooth his hair and replace his cap. The maneuver was standard, one he'd seen a thousand times on the playing field, but the cap was a different matter. He had never seen one like it anywhere. Definitely it was not the red felt job the man had on his head up till a moment ago. Matter of fact, it was brown. So was the rest of the man's uniform, including the socks, which also bore wide yellow stripes. And in place of the first baseman's glove he had been wearing was a skin-tight contraption that resembled the hand protectors used by golfers and horsemen.

Klosterman, under average height, rather stocky, now seemed positively elongated. He too had on a brown uniform. His pitch came plateward from below his shoulder, jerkily sidearm, with hardly any windup. Thoroughly unnerved, Gammill could not get his bat off his shoulder even though he had what must have been a good five seconds from the time it left Klosterman's hand.

But it was no longer Klosterman out there. The face that stared back at his was gaunt and sallow. Then of course it disappeared and Klosterman's sneering mouth and ruddy cheeks floated in front of him again.

He backed hastily out of the box and scraped some dirt over his hands. Klosterman's call to him was low-pitched but giggly with amusement. "What happened, Howie? Too much smoke on that one?"

Gammill wanted desperately to assume this was all some effect of the light on his still not-quite-healed eyes, and that at the same time was precisely his dread. The sun even this moment was attempting to pull his eyes up from the ground. Now it was much more than curiosity that impelled him to wonder what he evoked each time he performed his Aladdin ritual. However, his dogged determination asserted itself at this point. He would forge ahead. A hand on his forehead, thumb and middle finger stroking gently at the corner of either eye, and the earth's rotation slowed, an action so deftly managed that it would have seemed only a moment's brow-mopping to the casual onlooker. Anyway, all the attention was on Klosterman, who was cranking his arm for another high, hard one.

Except that Klosterman's pitch once more came in sidearm, and with so little steam on it he

In a surge of self-pity,
he wondered whether
anyone in all the world
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He had the secret
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knowledge of his doom
if he did.

could literally have counted the seams on the ball. A queerish ball it was, too, having no league stamp on it and a trifle lopsided, more a melon shape than exactly round.

He swatted grimly at it and watched it scoot out over second base where it was speared on the run by the shortstop with his bare left hand. Pausing to right himself, the man heaved the ball across to the first baseman, who awaited it with both feet straddling the bag.

Throughout this performance Gammill stood stock-still. Whatever was going on out there reminded him more of a vaudeville act of baseball than baseball itself. No one in his right mind played first base with his feet anchored like that, but then no one played barehanded either. Not in this day and age.

Nor, for that matter, in Pless's day. Hence the possibility, which was just now occurring to him, that *these eyes might retain pictures of the past, along with their other supernatural qualities*, could not be rejected out of hand.

Or now, wait a minute.

Gammill again felt a curious desire to look skyward and reluctantly succumbed to it.

He saw nothing unusual up there, but the mere fact that he wanted to stare into the sun and keep on staring was in itself unusual.

"Whattaya, crazy? Burn your lamps out, you keep doing that." Klosterman's voice was derisive, but the words sounded as a familiar melody to Gammill.

Someone else had referred to eyes as lamps, once. Someone long ago, in the infant days of baseball.

The Gladiator. He who, legend had it, used to stand on the street each morning upon emerging from his hotel and stare for moments on end directly into the sun. Gave the old lamps energy, he said when queried about his habit, and though his logic was thought to be the height of madness, who could argue with its results?

The Gladiator. For years the scourge of the old American Association.

And there it was. Gammill's jaw sagged. And as he tore his eyes away from the sun, he experienced at first a fantastic suspicion, then a sudden pulsating conviction. Unhurriedly he backed away from the plate and bent down as if to tie his shoe while he thought more. But his nonchalance now disguised panic: it was horribly clear to him that these eyes had not originated in any Walker B. Pless.

The American Association. The Beer-and-Baseball-on-Sunday League. Those drab brown uniforms out there a few moments ago, those absurd block caps, the awakening, confused images of another century versus the gaudy red and white Indian outfits he saw all around him now: two kinds of appearance and no reality at all.

He wished with all his heart that he had the capacity to tell himself otherwise, but he knew beyond any doubt that he had been in the company of the fabled old St. Louis Browns. The elongated pitcher, that had been Scissors Foutz who still held the all-time record for the highest lifetime winning percentage. None other than the Old Roman, Charlie Comiskey himself, at first base. The rest of them scattered out over the diamond he didn't know by name, but they were all there. The boys of Chris Von Der Ahe. For a moment his terror was overcome by a blade of fancy. Oh, the book he might write if he could somehow get them to stay long enough to talk to them!

But then his own psychic plight numbed him to any sensations of nostalgia, and he began trembling. All that looking into the sun the Gladiator had done hadn't been to store up energy but for quite another purpose.

He yearned to find some other explanation of events, but he knew he could not. In a surge of self-pity, he wondered whether anyone in all the world was as unlucky as he. He had the secret to becoming the greatest hitter in the history of baseball, and unlike Pless, who had lived in a day when hitting alone couldn't vault a man into the majors, he had nothing to stop him from exploiting it. Nothing except the complete knowledge of his doom if he did. It seemed all too clear to him that the Gladiator hadn't acquired his lamps by accident but had bargained for them hideously and then had somehow maneuvered to pass them on before he was called to account. Pless too had managed to escape the fate sealed in their centers.

Of course, at least some of this could be the product of a panicked imagination, but could he afford the risk? Could he gamble that whoever was luckless enough to have the eyes when the lights finally went out in them would not be made to pay

Browning's Lamps

the full electric bill?

Backing out of the batter's box, Gammill understood at last the difference between obsession and mere desire. For someone truly obsessed there would have been no decision to make now: the risks were never greater than the possibility of reward. But for him there was nothing in his mind but decision.

He pulled his face away from the sun and ran for the dugout.

In Louisville the following morning, he was unsurprised to learn when he looked up Pless's death certificate that the B. stood not for Babe or Bingo but for his mother's maiden name. Holzapple could tell him little of the early history of eye transplants but agreed to check the reference books. One of the first on record, it turned out, was performed in the same hospital where Holzapple now had surgical privileges. In 1905 a six-year-old boy who was blinded in a factory accident had received the eyes of his dying uncle. Neither the boy's name nor that of the donor was recorded in medical annals, but Gammill had only to check *The Baseball En-*

cyclopedia to fill in both with deadly accuracy.

The boy had been Walker Browning Pless, and his uncle had been Louis Rogers Browning.

Old Pete. The Gladiator.

Gammill would never know under what circumstances the original pact for the incredible eyes had been made. Nor would he ever discover whether Pless had known the awful secret of the eyes and schemed mightily to get them out of his head. But then no one had to know anything of his own brush with sorcery.

Holzapple charged him a thousand dollars for the eyes of a toothbrush salesman who had fallen off a motorcycle, and what with the effects of the two operations, his vision was only eighty percent of what it had once been. But Gammill would settle for seeing the world at normal speed, no matter how dimly.

By the middle of fall he was back at work on *Day of Gold*. Holzapple never told him what he had done with the bewitched eyes, and Gammill never asked. It is said, though, there is a mole in Louisville now that comes out of the ground at dawn and lies about the rest of the day, staring at the sun. 17

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Fantasy in Clay

Of all the creatures who crawled out of the darkness in the nineteenth century, perhaps the strangest are the ones captured in the British studio of the Martin brothers.

From 1880 to 1914, the four Martins—Robert Wallace, Walter, Edwin, and Charles—created in clay an unholy world of bizarre birds, half-human faces, and other grotesque creatures. A hundred years later, in a landmark exhibition, these monsters have invaded America.

The eldest Martin brother, Robert Wallace, was originally trained as a stonecutter in the medieval manner. This was the age of the Gothic revival, of Hugo's *Hunchback of Notre Dame*, of grotesques leering out of dim church windows. He wrote, "My daydreams and my nightly visions teem with Gothic, a very forest of glistening spires . . . Through loopholes which barely disturbed the gloom within I have seen strings of sleeping

Photographs by
Scott Hyde

THE MARTIN
BROTHERS, FOUR
VICTORIAN ENGLISH
POTTERS, CREATED
A GROTESQUE
MENAGERIE
OF 'BOOBIES,
BOOJUMS,
AND SNARKS.'

bats and in darksome chambers found quaint carvings never intended to see the light."

He began producing his strange ceramics in Fulham, London, in 1873, and within several years the Martin Brothers Pottery, relocated in Southall, Middlesex, was fashioning pitchers that resembled faces, tobacco jars

that looked like birds, and odd-shaped figurines that nobody could quite compare to anything. Historians consider them the first real artworks to come from an English pottery of their time.

But despite the enthusiasm of Pre-Raphaelite artists such as Edward Burne-Jones and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, their wonder monstrosities went unloved for many years. The Martins could rarely afford the best clay, and could only fire up their kiln twice a year. Often they couldn't bear to part with favorite pieces and refused to sell them. In 1903, a fire destroyed their show in London's Brownlow Street, along with two years' worth of work. In 1910 Charles died in an insane asylum. In 1915 Edwin died of a horrible facial cancer. A sister died of a monkey's bite, and Walter died of a blood clot, caused when he innocently banged his elbow while filling the kiln.

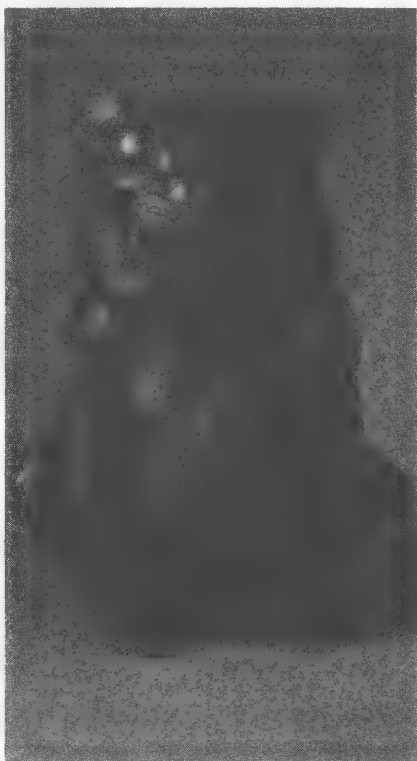
The work of these tortured lives is now on display in a show

Fantasy in Clay

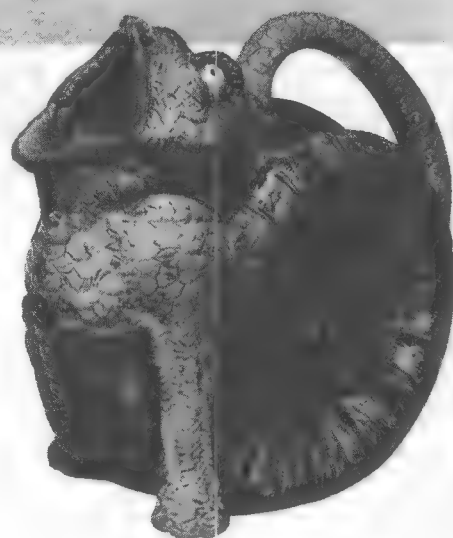
entitled "Boobies, Boojums, and Snarks: The Ceramic Curiosities of the Martin Brothers," assembled by New York gallery owner Todd Volpe. From his own gallery the show moved to the Delaware Art Museum, and from May 8 to June 30 it can be seen at the Everson Museum in Syracuse, New York.

What was once unloved is now highly valued indeed. Rita Reif, in the *New York Times*, hailed the exhibit as "a memorable, highly imaginative show," and the various pieces of Martin-ware, as it has come to be known, fetch enormous prices from collectors. One of the Martins' birds recently sold for nearly fourteen thousand dollars. Like the Martin brothers themselves, modern art lovers clearly have a taste for the extraordinary and the bizarre.

Below: His master's voice? This quizzical canine, lop ears and all, is one of the Martin brothers' gentlest creations.



Above: Like anyone else, monsters like to stay out late once in a while. And like anyone else, they have their irate wives to deal with when they finally return home.



According to mystical tradition, it's said, humans who commit the sin of impatience are reborn as snails ... or perhaps even as snail-like ceramic watering pots.



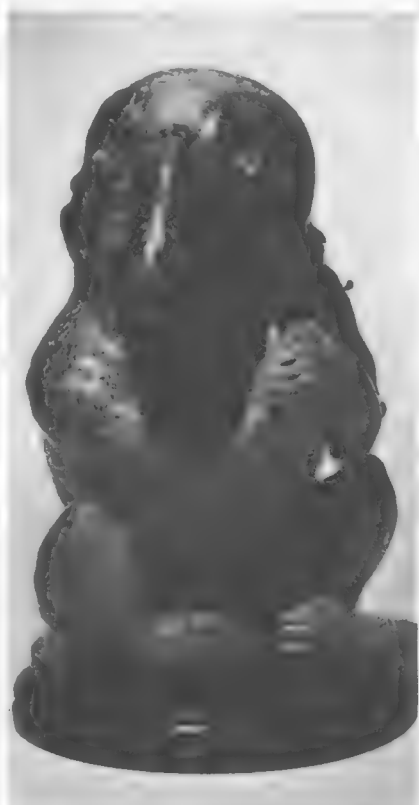
Left: In Greek mythology, Cerberus was the three-headed dog who guarded the entrance to Hades. In the Martins' version, the three heads clearly do not get along.

Below: You can fool some of the creatures some of the time ... but if you try to fool this one, you'll find out that those talons aren't just for traction. Bird-shaped tobacco jars with expressions ranging from the comic to the sinister were the Martin brothers' most popular item.

Right: "Guilty ... (cough cough) ... Guilty! ... (ahem) ... GUILTY! ... All right, bailiff, I'm ready. Send in the first case." This irascible-looking English judge, complete with wig, might almost have stepped out of a Dickens novel.



Fantasy in Clay



Above: "I've just had the most delicious lunch. I wish I could remember his name." Smiling with evil satisfaction, this well-fed-looking creature—an amalgam of simian, canine, human, and batrachian—seems unperturbed by the world's low opinion of English cooking.



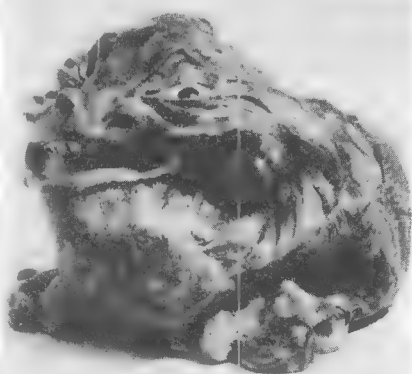
Above: Hollywood sources tell us that this amiable-looking fellow is up for the starring role in *Son of The Blob*. Most of the Martins' pieces represent birds, dogs, or other real-life species, but this figure, amorphous yet expressive, belongs solely to the world of fantasy.



Left: The eyes are so lifelike you'd almost swear ... Wait a minute ... In the dim light of a Victorian parlor, this alarmingly realistic face might have startled many an unsuspecting matron.



"My dear, you look ravishing. In fact, good enough to eat!" The comic quality of the Martin brothers' creations belies the poverty, misery, and madness that bedeviled the four brothers' lives.



Above: It's hard to imagine a Victorian family actually using this as a cookie jar. Like the other Martin brothers pieces, in fact, its purpose was more aesthetic than utilitarian.



Right: Striking a pose reminiscent of a curbside derelict, this pagan figure, two thousand years from home, seems to have fallen on hard times.

Fantasy in Clay



Left: Known as "Wally birds" after Robert Wallace Martin, their designer, the Martins' tobacco jars wear unnervingly human expressions. They are, in fact, caricatures in clay, poking fun at human foibles—and sometimes at actual contemporaries such as Gladstone and Disraeli.

Below: **Nanook of Northumbria?** This foot-high pitcher in the form of a fur-clad Eskimo seems to relish the warmth of an English fireside.





Above: Birds do it. Bees do it. Even creatures just like these do it. These grotesque dogs, reminiscent of ancient Chinese porcelains, make an inseparable pair.



"Oh, yes, he's very fond of children. Lamb chops, too."



Left: He claims to be a frog prince. Any volunteers for kiss-and-tell?

Anniversary Dinner

by D.J. Pass

A MODERN AMERICAN CAUTIONARY TALE
ABOUT ONIONS, MARIJUANA, AND THE GENERATION GAP.

The late afternoon sun came through the cafe curtains on the kitchen windows and fell warmly on Henry's back. This was the time of day he felt most comfortable. And most thankful: as he sat at the table and watched Elinor put the finishing touches on their dinner, he never failed to think how fortunate they had been. Fortunate to have each other, to have lived so comfortably and so happily together.

"Here you are, dear." Elinor set the plate of stew down in front of him and wiped her hands on her apron. "I hope you like it."

"Like it?" Henry smiled. "I've liked it for forty years now. I don't see why I wouldn't like it tonight." Elinor smiled back. Her soft gray curls, rosy face, and gold-rimmed glasses made her look like a grandmother—a very pretty grandmother.

"Forty-two," she corrected him. "Forty-three on the third of next month."

"Another anniversary? They seem to come so close together." Henry reached across the table and put his hand on Elinor's. "I guess that's because I've been so happy."

"You're awfully sentimental tonight."

"And you're blushing."

Elinor slapped his hand. "Eat your stew."

Henry took a bite of the stew. Elinor was a consummate cook, and the stew was just as good as it had been forty-odd years ago. It was perfect, in fact, with the minor exception of the onions.

"How is it, dear?"

"Couldn't be better." Henry grinned. "Perfect as always."

"Good. What would you like to do to celebrate our anniversary this year?"

"I haven't thought about it. Have any ideas?"

"Well, I thought we could have a special dinner at home, just the two of us."

"The two of us?" Henry laughed.

"In a sense." Elinor smiled. "You liked the goulash I made last year so well."

"Yes, indeed I did. I recall you made so much that we spent the whole next day packaging the leftovers up for the freezer."

"A year of goulash ... not that it wasn't delightful goulash ..."

"Oh, I didn't mean I'd make it again! No, I was thinking about something with a burgundy sauce and bay leaves." Elinor's eyes became thoughtful. It was an expression Henry loved to see on her. It made him think of an artist having a vision.

"Sounds terrific!"

"Everything but the meat is in the garden. The mushrooms are doing well. Some carrots, onions—"

"About the onions ..." Henry began.

"Yes?" Elinor smiled sweetly. "What about them, Henry?"

"Ah ..." Henry's courage failed him. "I think we ought to harvest them earlier this year. They were a bit sharp last season."

"Of course."

"And now, why don't we take our port out to the hot tub? There's a nip in the air, perfect night for watching the stars come out."

"You're much too romantic for a man your age." Elinor laughed. "I don't know how much longer I can keep up with you."

On Saturday Henry got out the old Plymouth and they drove down into town. Since their retirement, Henry and Elinor had stayed on their farm in the hills as much as possible. There was little to entice them away from home. The closeness of their relationship had made close friends unnecessary, and they had no living relatives. Life on the farm was so nearly self-sufficient that they only made one trip a month into town. These excursions



were occasions for neither pleasure nor pain, simply something that had to be done. Ten minutes at the hardware store, half an hour at the supermarket, and they were back on the main road out of town.

There were hitchhikers all along the highway, just as there always were on the weekend. Henry eyed them as they passed, ultimately giving each a disapproving frown.

When they were within a few miles of the turn-off that led up into the hills, Henry spotted a girl sitting by the road with her thumb half-heartedly up.

"Look at that, Elinor. Can't be more than twenty years old."

Elinor pushed her glasses up her nose and peered at the girl. "Not even that old. What's a young girl like that doing out on the road? It certainly isn't safe."

"What do you think?"

"Oh, yes, Henry. You must definitely stop and pick her up."

Henry eased the Plymouth delicately off the road just past the girl. She jumped up and ran to the car. As she came up alongside the car she stopped, peered in at Henry and Elinor, and broke into a big grin.

"Wow! Thanks a lot!" She threw her pack into the back seat and slammed the door shut behind her.

"Glad to help," Henry said.

"Especially a young girl," Elinor added. "Isn't it dangerous for you to be out hitchhiking?"

"No, I'm really careful who I ride with. I've been sitting there for over an hour because I didn't like the looks of the people who stopped for me.

That's why I was so glad when you stopped. I feel a lot safer with a couple like you."

"You mean we're too old to be dangerous?" Henry teased her. "No, don't be embarrassed. It works both ways. I never pick up hitchhikers, but, well, you remind me of our granddaughter so much. I just hated to see you sitting on the side of the road. You don't know what kind of fiend might pick you up."

"Yeah, I guess there are a lot of fiends on the road."

"Where are you going, dear?" Elinor asked.

"I wanted to get to Springfield tonight, but I don't think I'm going to make it. It'll be dark in a couple of hours."

"But what if you don't get a ride? Where will you stay the night?"

The girl shrugged.

"Drat it!"

"What's wrong, Henry?"

"We forgot to get any tea at the market."

"That's all right, dear. You can run in at that little store where we turn off the highway."

"Good idea, Elinor." In a few minutes they had reached the turnoff and Henry pulled up to the store.

"Wow, I just can't believe you two," the girl said, after Henry left the car.

"Why, what do you mean?"

"You and your husband. You're just the archetypal grandparent types. You ought to be making tv commercials for apple pie and lemonade."

"Are we really like that?" Elinor marveled. "I certainly never thought of myself as a grandmother

Anniversary Dinner

type, though I suppose I am. We have a granddaughter about your age. How old are you?"

"Nineteen." Elinor didn't believe it, and the girl's blush betrayed her lie.

"Nineteen! Well, you're a lovely young woman, if you don't mind my saying so . . . I was just now thinking, wouldn't it be better if you went with us up to our place for the night? It isn't far, and you can start out for Springfield in the morning."

"Really? I'd love that! The truth is, I was getting pretty scared about what I'd do after dark."

"We'll enjoy having you. We don't get much company."

"What about your husband? Will it be all right with him?"

"Don't worry about Henry; he's the kindest man in the world."

Of course, Henry would be delighted to have her stay the night with them. He would have offered himself, but he had felt awkward about it. It would be good to have a young person around the house again.

And she loved the farm. "I've never eaten any grapes like these," she told Elinor between seeds.

"They're wine grapes. Henry's done wonders getting them to grow here. We make all our own wine. And over here is the garden."

"This is really too much. Do you grow all your own food, too?"

"Almost. We have to buy a few things, but we're very proud of our near self-sufficiency."

"Do you have animals?"

"We have some chickens and goats for eggs and milk, but we found it was cheaper not to raise our own meat."

"You must have everything here."

"We even grow our own marijuana."

The girl was out of expletives; she could only stare at Elinor with bulging eyes.

"I'm certainly not being a good hostess, am I?" Elinor clucked. "Would you like some? It's drying in the barn; you can have some before dinner."

"You folks are too much! Nobody's going to believe this."

"We try to live comfortably, and I suppose we indulge ourselves. But what else is there in life, especially at our age?"

"At any age."

"Hmmm. Now you come over here and relax a bit before dinner."

"A hot tub!"

"Henry built it himself." Elinor couldn't keep a note of pride out of her voice. "It's rather small, but we like the coziness. You can sit here and watch the sun go down in the hills. We do it almost every night."

The girl undressed and slid into the warm

water. Inside the tub was a little shelf with a built-in hookah. Imagine, she thought, those two old people sitting out here in their tub every night, stoned out of their heads and watching the sunset.

"Here you are, my dear." Elinor stuffed the hookah and lit it. "I brought you some wine, too. I hope you like sherry."

"This is really too much. But I don't want to hog your tub . . ."

"Nonsense. We're thrilled to have someone to cater to. You relax, and I'll gather some vegetables for dinner."

The hills turned red, then purple. As she watched the colors, the girl thought about how she had been worried about spending the night on the side of the road. She giggled as she thought of her friends. They really wouldn't believe it when she told them about this weird old couple and their Shangri-la in the hills.

"Would you like some vegetables to nibble on?" She looked up to see Elinor standing beside the tub with an apron full of vegetables. "Maybe some celery, or some carrots? I'll just drop them in the tub and you can pick what you like."

"Sure, drop 'em in."

"Shall I turn the water up a bit? It's starting to get chilly."

"Sure, jack it up some. And maybe you'd hand me a shingle off your house. It is made of gingerbread, isn't it?"

Elinor walked away trailing silvery laughter.

"So warm," the girl murmured. "Womb . . ."

Henry grunted as he rolled a cask of wine up to the tub. "I've got to get some smaller casks," he muttered. "I'm getting too old to be manhandling these." He thought momentarily how it was a shame that they really didn't have any children, or grandchildren for that matter. He could have used the help.

"You're not too old for anything, Henry." Elinor dropped another apron-load of vegetables into the tub. "Here you are. Some nice mushrooms, some onions . . ."

The girl didn't bother to answer; her eyes were getting glassy.

"Shall I turn the water up?" Hearing nothing from the girl, Elinor turned the thermostat all the way up.

"Elinor?"

"Yes, Henry?"

"In all the years we've been married, you've fixed a lot of meals for me—"

"Thousands."

"Elinor." He looked into her bright eyes and hoped her feelings wouldn't be hurt. Both a whine and a tremble crept into his voice. "Elinor, you *always* put the onions in too early." 17



HUNDREDS PURSUED HIM—AND THE ONLY ESCAPE WAS DEATH.

The pain hadn't stopped for hours. It seared his shoulder, and moving was making it worse. He shuddered, barely able to go on.

Only an hour ago.

The family had been together, the children playing in their favorite hiding place. Beautiful children, children of their own. The two of them had watched so proudly. They were lucky. Children were rare these days. And after her first terror with the Dark Ones, having a family had seemed impossible, it was getting bad again.

What did they use that made their spears hurt so much? He'd felt it splay the skin out when it buried itself in his back. It was like no pain he'd ever felt.

She and the children had escaped. He wasn't sure where. North, perhaps. Away from where the Dark Ones could try and murder them.

He knew the children must be tired, wherever they were. To be chased by the Dark Ones would be a nightmare for them.

He, too, was tired. But he knew he had to keep moving.

Night.

His eyes ached. He couldn't see far ahead.

The Dark Ones might turn back. He knew they were frightened of the blackness. It could be his chance.

He stopped to breathe for a moment, and the cooling air soothed inside.

But seconds later, he screamed.

The Dark Ones had shot again. The thing was twisting in his neck, and he shrieked for it to stop.

He felt as if he were going to lose consciousness as it tore and burned inside.

She and the children.

He had to keep moving and see them once more. He loved them so. He had to get to them before the Dark Ones found him. *Keep moving*, he told himself.

Keep moving.

But the pain was spreading.

He looked back and saw the Dark Ones coming closer, shouting with glee. He couldn't breathe. *I'm growing weaker*, he realized. *Slowing down.*

He began to cry. He didn't want to die without seeing her and the children one last time. But the pain was getting worse.

He pleaded for someone to help.

Then, suddenly, he felt it: a rupturing explosion in his shoulder, and everything went black.

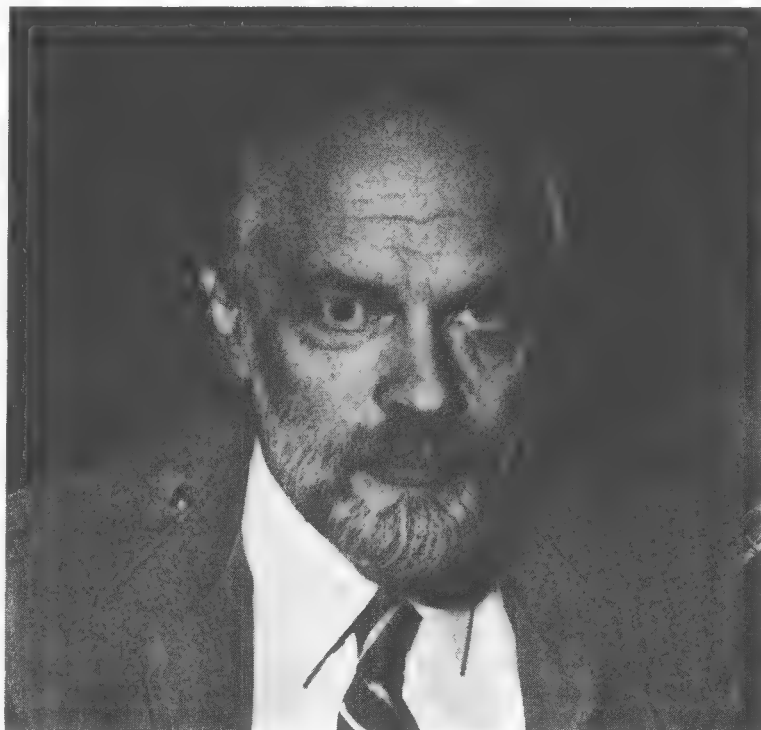
A thin rain fell as the laughing voices neared and circled slowly, looking at what they had done.

The body had been ripped and shredded and oily blood splashed everywhere, dyeing everything it touched.

As they worked, joking among themselves, they didn't notice her watching.

With the children there beside her, she saw them haul her mate upward, and began to weep. Then, moaning a cry of eternal loss which rang to the depths, she and the children plunged their great bodies back into the bloody sea.

As they fled, seeking the safety of the deeper waters, the echoes of their cries were answered by the haunted, faraway responses of the few who remained. 17



Philip K. Dick

1928-1982

A FINAL INTERVIEW WITH SCIENCE FICTION'S BOLDEST VISIONARY,
WHO TALKS CANDIDLY ABOUT *BLADE RUNNER*, INNER VOICES,
AND THE TEMPTATIONS OF HOLLYWOOD

[Editor's note: When **John Boonstra** conducted the following interview with Philip K. Dick, he never thought that it might be Dick's last. Dick himself was in excellent spirits and was looking forward to the premiere of *Blade Runner*, based on one of his novels, with considerable excitement. Boonstra's introduction—which we've left unaltered—reflects its subject's optimism. In late February, however, Dick suffered a massive stroke; and now, as we go to press, we've learned that he has died in a California hospital on the morning of March 2. His death makes the following interview all the more poignant, particularly the hopeful note on which it ends.]

Philip K. Dick may be a household word—in Hollywood, at least—by year's end. With his sf novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* filmed by Ridley Scott as *Blade Runner*, and with the Disney studio budgeting an equally large sum for the forthcoming *Total Recall*, based on his

story "We Can Remember It for You Wholesale," fresh attention is certain to come to Dick's thirty years of outstanding work.

Among his peers he has never been underrated. "Dick has been ... casting illumination by the klieg lights of his imagination on a terra incognita of staggering dimensions," wrote Harlan Ellison in *Dangerous Visions*. Brian Aldiss has favorably compared Dick's "ghastly humor" to Dickens and Kafka. And Norman Spinrad states the case as plainly as possible in his introduction to the Gregg Press edition of *Dr. Blood-money*: "Fifty or one hundred years from now, Dick may well be recognized in retrospect as the greatest American novelist of the second half of the twentieth century."

From his first book (*Solar Lottery*) through his most recent (*The Divine Invasion*), Philip Kendred Dick has focused on the struggle—in all walks of life, in every occupation—to see beyond the illusions that separate mankind

from the possibility of authentic being; to recognize the human among the androids. His genius weds a core of memorable characters to paradoxical plots rich with philosophical inquiry, but a brief description can't explain how entertaining this eclectic mix invariably proves to be.

In the late 1960s, Dick showed increasing interest in drug-induced altered states of consciousness, but *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*, often cited as LSD-based, was completed before Dick's minimal exposure to hallucinogens. Similarly, some of Dick's earlier novels (*The Cosmic Puppets*, *Eye in the Sky*) presage his controversial visionary episodes of recent years—episodes which he's described in print and which have formed the basis of his recent fiction. He holds that a higher consciousness—possibly the unleashed right hemisphere of his own brain, possibly an alien or angelic entity—seized temporary control of his body and effected lasting changes in his life. It provided him with verifiable in-

Philip K. Dick

formation that, in one case, diagnosed an unsuspected birth defect in his young son.

Dick's thirty-four published novels and six short story collections are so uniformly good that it seems a shame to single out any. But if I had to be marooned with a half-dozen, I'd take *Dr. Bloodmoney*, about nuclear war and the psionic abilities of a homunculus called Hoppy; *Martian Time-Slip*, where daily life on the miserable Mars colony is upended by an autistic child; *Time out of Joint*, featuring the marvelously named Ragle Gumm, unknowing linchpin of Western civilization; *Confessions of a Crap Artist*, a mainstream novel of devastating love glimpsed through the funhouse-mirror mind of one glorious fool; and *VALIS* and *The Divine Invasion*, which describe God's return to this globe after His—and/or Hers—puzzling absence.

VALIS is set in a present-day reality identical to our own, except for its protagonist's contention that "the Roman Empire never ended." Such revelations send Horselover Fat, who is either mad or enlightened, after the new Messiah—a two-year-old girl. The closest this tour de force comes to conventional sf is its account of a film that contains encoded information on the Messiah's whereabouts; the entire book grew from a draft which was that movie's plot. *The Divine Invasion* brings the themes of *VALIS* into a recognizable sf future of spacecraft and social changes. The actual God of the Old Testament appears as a young boy who must lose his amnesia (a concept called anamnesis, crucial to Dick's recent work) to defeat the powers that hold the earth in illusion. Along for the ride are the boy's all-too-human "father," Herb; the prophet Elijah; and a pop singer suspiciously similar to the author's favorite, Linda Ronstadt.

But it seems a shame to single out just half a dozen of Dick's novels. I can't exclude Ubik's world of devolving forms, or the Hugo-winning novel of the Axis victory, *The Man in the High Castle*, in which the eastern half of the United States is controlled by Nazi Germany and the western half by Japan. Or *Clans of the Alphane Moon*. Or Dick's bitter eulogy to the drug culture, *A Scanner Darkly*. And as Phil Dick is only fifty-three, there is the promise of more to come. He may just be hitting his prime.

TZ: Your forthcoming novel, *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer*, is essentially a non-sf literary work based on the mysterious death in the desert of your friend Bishop James Pike, and I've been told that you wrote it in lieu of doing a novelization of the *Blade Runner* screenplay. Why did you choose to write a book with openly religious themes instead of a lucrative, all-but-certain bestseller?

Dick: The amount of money involved would have been very great, and the film people offered to cut us in on the merchandising rights. But they required a suppression of the original novel, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, in favor of the commercialized novelization based on the screenplay. My agency computed that I would accrue, conservatively, \$400,000 if I did the novelization. In contrast, if we went the route of rereleasing the original novel, I would make about \$12,500.

Blade Runner's people were putting tremendous pressure on us to do the novelization—or to allow someone else to come in and do it, like Alan Dean Foster. But we felt that the original was a good novel. And also, I did not want to write what I call the "El Cheapo" novelization. I did want to do the *Timothy Archer* novel.

So we stuck to our guns, and at

"I may find that I've turned down \$400,000 and wound up with nothing."

one point *Blade Runner* became so cold-blooded they threatened to withdraw the logo rights. We wouldn't be able to say, "The novel on which *Blade Runner* is based." We'd be unable to use any stills from the film.

Finally we came to an agreement with them. We are adamant about rereleasing the original novel. And I have done *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer*.

Now, the payment on that novel is very small. It's only \$7,500, which is just about minimum these days. It's because in the mainstream field I am essentially a novice writer. I'm not known. And I'm being paid on the scale that a new writer coming into the field would be paid on. The contract is a two-book contract, and there's a science fiction novel in it.

And it pays exactly three times for the science fiction what is being paid for *Timothy Archer*.

TZ: Have you begun the sf novel?

Dick: I've done two different outlines. I'll probably wind up laminating them together and making one book out of it, which is what I like to do, develop independent outlines and then laminate them into one book. That's where I get my multiple plot ideas. I really enjoy doing that, a paste-up job. A synthesis, in other words.

This second novel is not due until January 1, 1983, so I've got time. Right now I'm just physically too tired to do the typing. It looks like it's going to be a good book, too. It's called *The Owl in Daylight*.

Simon and Schuster wanted *Archer* first, and I wanted to do it first. Of course, I may find that I made a very great error, because it may not turn out to be a successful book. It may be that I've lost the ability to write a literary novel, if indeed I ever had the ability to do so. It's been over twenty years since I've written a non-science-fiction novel, and it's very problematical whether I can write mainstream, literary-quality-type fiction. This is definitely an unproven thing, an X factor. I may find that I've turned down \$400,000 and wound up with nothing.

TZ: I don't consider *VALIS* science fiction. It could have been published as a mainstream novel and gotten who knows what kind of attention that way. I'm sure it got more response with its sf wrapping than it would have otherwise. But it is quite literary itself; marginal sf, at best.

Dick: I would call *VALIS* a picaresque novel, experimental science fiction. *The Divine Invasion* has a very conventional structure for science fiction, almost science fantasy; no experimental devices of any kind. *Timothy Archer* is in no way science fiction; it starts out the day John Lennon is shot and then goes into flashbacks. And yet the three do form a trilogy constellating around a basic theme. This is something that is extremely important to me in terms of the organic

development of my ideas and preoccupations in my writing. So for me to derail myself and do that cheapo novelization of *Blade Runner*—a completely commercialized thing aimed at twelve-year-olds—would have probably been disastrous to me artistically. Although financially, as my agent explained it, I would literally be set up for life. I don't think my agent figures I'm going to live much longer.

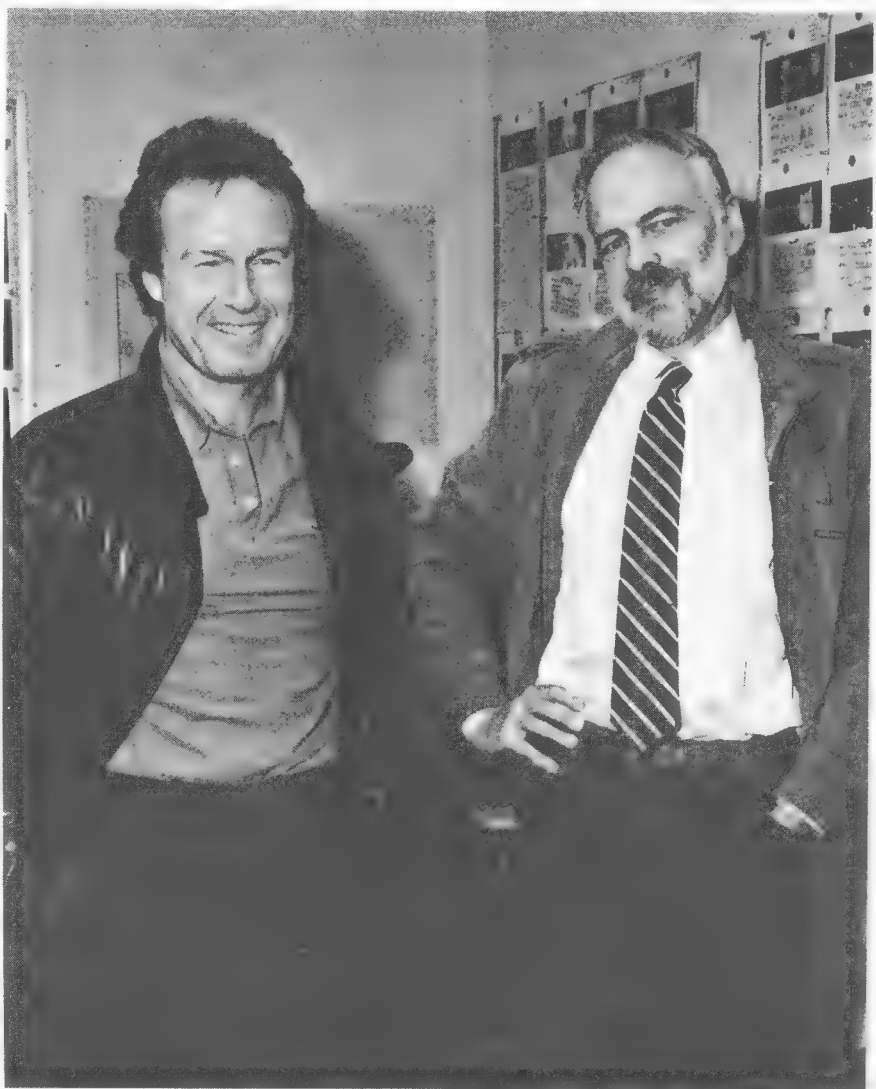
It's like Dante's *Inferno*. A writer sent to the Inferno is sentenced to rewrite all his novels—his best ones, at least—as cheapo, twelve-year-old hack stuff for all eternity. A terrible punishment! The fact that it would earn me a lot of money illuminates the grotesqueness of the situation. When it's finally offered to me, I'm more or less apathetic to the megabucks. I live a rather ascetic life. I don't have any material wants and I have no debts. My condominium is paid off, my car is paid off, my stereo is paid off.

At least, this way, I attempt the finest book I can write—and if I fail, at least I will have taken my best shot. I think a person must always take his best shot at everything, whether he repairs shoes, drives a bus, writes novels, or sells fruit. You do the best you can. And if you fail, well, you blame it on your mother, I guess.

TZ: How do you compare the *VALIS* trilogy to the rest of your work?

Dick: I jettisoned the first version of *VALIS*, which was a very conventional book. That version appears in the finished book as the movie. I cast around for a model that would bring something new into science fiction, and it occurred to me to go all the way back to the picaresque novel and have my characters be *picaresques*—rogues—and write it in the first person vernacular, using a rather loose plot. I feel there's tremendous relevance in the picaresque novel at this time. Donleavy's *The Ginger Man* is one; so is *The Adventures of Augie March* by Saul Bellow. I see this as a protest form of the novel, a repudiation of the more structured bourgeois novel that has been so popular.

I'm reprocessing my own life. I've had a very interesting ten years starting in 1970 when my wife Nancy left me and went off with a Black Panther, much to my surprise. As a result of which I hit bottom. I mean, I just fell into the gutter, I crashed into the streets in shock when this happened.



"The two reinforce each other." With the "bad blood" between him and the studio a thing of the past, Dick poses with *Blade Runner* director Ridley Scott.

I was very bourgeois. I had a wife and child, I was buying a house, I drove a Buick and wore a suit and tie. All of a sudden my wife left me and I wound up in the street with street people. And after I climbed out of that—which was ultimately a death trip on my part—I thought, "Well, I've got some interesting first-hand material that I'd like to write about. I will recycle my own life in the terms of a novel." Having done that in *A Scanner Darkly*, I was faced with what to do next. It took me a long time before I felt that I had what I wanted.

Now, prior to that I tended to view people in terms of the artisan. I worked for eight years in retail. I managed one of the largest record stores on the West Coast in the fifties, and I had worked at a radio repair shop when I was in high school. I tended to view people in terms of "the tv repairman," "the salesman," and so forth. Then later, as a result of my street experience, I tended to view

people as essentially rogues. I don't mean *lovable* rogues, I mean unscrupulous rogues out to hustle you at any moment for any reason. I found them endlessly fascinating. And I didn't see people of this type adequately represented in fiction.

TZ: Sometimes the world at large strikes me as being an sf novel, and not necessarily a pleasant one. I often have the feeling that I am living in the future I was reading about fifteen years ago. I wonder what that's like from your perspective, having written the stuff I was reading when I was an adolescent.

Dick: Oh, Jesus, I agree with you completely. My agent said, after he finished *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer*, "You know, in your science fiction they drive things called flobbles and quibbles, and in this one they drive Hondas—but it's still essentially a science fiction novel. Although I can't explain exactly *how*."

It's really as if the world caught up with science fiction. The years

Philip K. Dick

went by and the disparity, the temporal gap, began to close until finally there *was* no temporal gap. We were no longer writing about the future. In a sense, the very concept of projecting it ahead is meaningless, because we are there, literally, in our actual world. In 1955, when I'd write a science fiction novel, I'd set it in the year 2000. I realized around 1977 that, "My God, it's getting exactly like those novels we used to write in the nineteen-fifties!"

Everything's just turning out to be real. That creates within science fiction a completely fantastic type of novel which is set on the planet "Mordaria" or "Malefoozia" in another galaxy. And all the Malefoozians have eighteen heads, and sixteen of them have a sexual act together. In other words, no connection with Earth, none of the social satire and comment you get in works like Kurt Vonnegut's *Player Piano*. Which is a perfect example; you might just as well go downtown to the big business offices and just walk in and sit down, as read *Player Piano*.

TZ: In earlier interviews you have described your encounter, in 1974, with "a transcendently rational mind." Does this "tutelary spirit" continue to guide you?

Dick: It hasn't spoken a word to me since I wrote *The Divine Invasion*. The voice is identified as *Ruah*, which is the Old Testament word for the Spirit of God. It speaks in a feminine

money. When did you make your first sales, and how long were you writing before that?

Dick: I started my first novel when I was thirteen years old. That's the honest-to-God truth. I taught myself to type and started my first novel when I was in the eighth grade. It was called *Return to Lilliput*.

I made my first sale in November of 1951, and my first stories were published in 1952. At the time I graduated from high school I was writing regularly, one novel after another. None of which, of course, sold. I was living in Berkeley, and all the milieu-reinforcement there was for the literary stuff. I knew all kinds of people who were doing literary-type novels. And I knew some of the very fine avant-garde poets in the Bay area—Robert Duncan, Jack Spicer, Philip Lamantia, that whole crowd. They all encouraged me to write, but there was no encouragement to write science fiction and no encouragement to sell anything. But I wanted to sell, and I also wanted to do science fiction. My ultimate dream was to be able to do both literary stuff and science fiction.

Well, it didn't work out that way. I was reading a lot of philosophy at that time. My wife came home one day from school and said, "What is it you're reading again?"

I said, "Moses Maimonides' *Guide for the Perplexed*."

She said, "Yeah, I mentioned that

ship with my ex-wives. In fact, my most recent ex-wife—there are so many that I have to list them numerically—and I are very, very good friends. I have three children. My youngest is seven, and she brings him over all the time.

But the reason all my marriages break up is I'm so autocratic when I'm writing. I become like Beethoven: completely bellicose and defensive in terms of guarding my privacy. It's very hard to live with me when I'm writing.

TZ: You've said that many of the characters in your fiction are thinly disguised variations of people you've known personally.

Dick: That is correct.

TZ: What effect has this had on them?

Dick: They hate my bloody guts! They'd like to rend me to shreds! I expect that someday they'll all fall on me and beat the crap out of me.

I find that you can only develop characters based upon actual people; there's really no such thing as a character that springs *ex nihilo* from the brow of Zeus. Tendencies are extracted from actual people, but of course the people aren't transferred intact. This is not journalism, this is fiction.

The most important thing is picking up the speech pattern, picking up the cadence of actual spoken English. That's the main thing I look for—the little mannerisms, the word choice.

TZ: We've talked about your mainstream writing and your science fiction. What about fantasy writing? Did you ever write for *The Twilight Zone*?

Dick: No. But I would have welcomed the opportunity. I did some radio scripts for the Mutual Broadcasting system, and I wrote fantasy-type things for them.

I always lie to myself and tell myself that I never really want to do fantasy, but the record does not bear me out. The record shows that my original interest was that kind of *Twilight Zone* fantasy, fantasy set in the present. But you couldn't make a living writing this kind of stuff, while you *could* make a living writing science fiction. In 1953 there were something like thirteen science fiction magazines, and in June of that year I had stories in seven of them simultaneously—all science fiction. I published thirty stories in 1953.

"As a result of my street experience, I tended to view people as essentially rogues."

voice and tends to express statements regarding the messianic expectation.

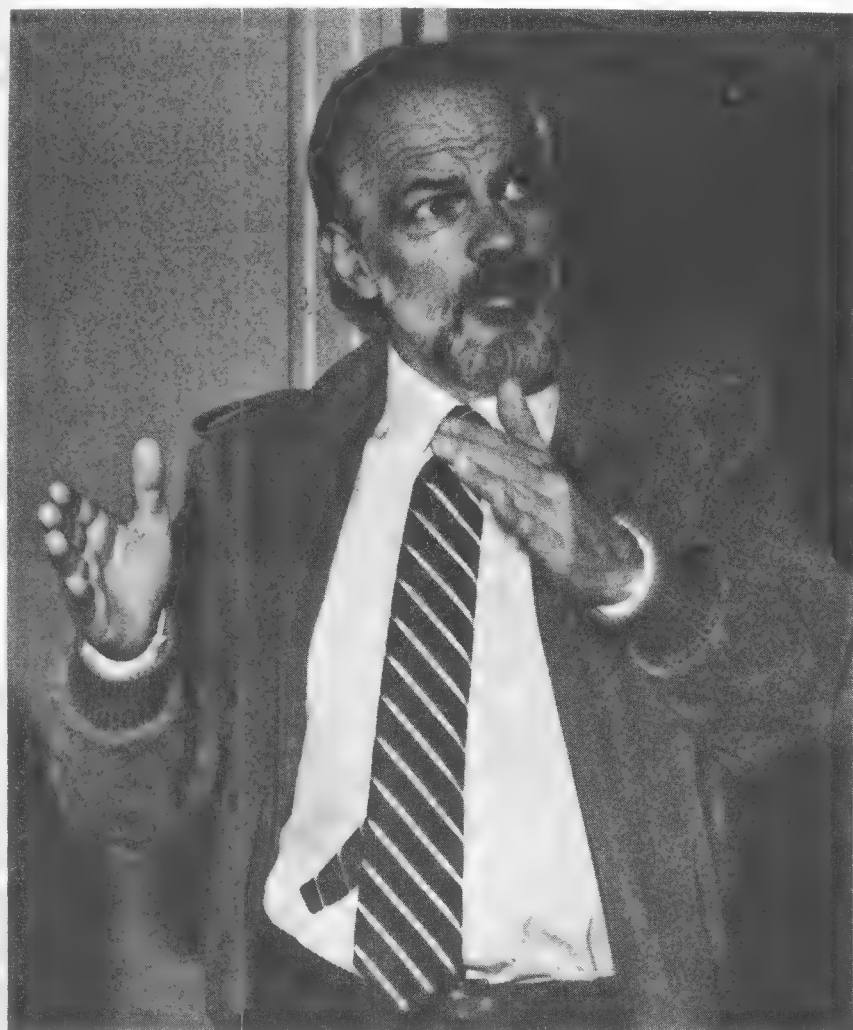
It guided me for a while. It has spoken to me sporadically since I was in high school. I expect that if a crisis arises it will say something again. It's very economical in what it says. It limits itself to a few very terse, succinct sentences. I only hear the voice of the spirit when I'm falling asleep or waking up. I have to be very receptive to hear it. It sounds as though it's coming from millions of miles away.

TZ: What made you into a writer? You were saying it wasn't for the

to my instructor. He says you're probably the only human being on the face of the earth who at this moment is reading Moses Maimonides." I was just sitting there eating a ham sandwich and reading it. It didn't strike me as odd.

TZ: You mention one of your wives. I know you've been through a couple of marriages . . .

Dick: At least. There's more. I hate to say how many—an endless succession of divorces, all stemming from recklessly engaged-in and seized-upon marriages. I still have a good relation-



Dick sees the need for new forms of science fiction. "We were no longer writing about the future. In a sense, the very concept of projecting it ahead is meaningless, because we are there, literally, in our actual world."

TZ: Why did you temporarily give up writing at the end of that decade?

Dick: By the year 1959 the science fiction field had totally collapsed. The readership had shrunk down to 100,000 readers *total*. Now, to show you how few readers that is, *Solar Lottery* alone had sold 300,000 copies in 1955.

Many writers had left the field. We could not make a living. I had gone to work making jewelry with my wife. I wasn't happy. I didn't enjoy making jewelry. I had no talent whatsoever. She had the talent. She is still a jeweler and a very fine one, making gorgeous stuff which she sells to places like Neiman-Marcus. It's great art. But I couldn't do anything except polish what she made.

I decided that I'd better tell her I was working on a book so I wouldn't have to polish her jewelry all day long. We had a little cabin, and I went over there with a sixty-five-dollar portable typewriter made in Hong Kong—the "e" key was stuck on it. I started with nothing but the name "Mister Tagomi" written on a scrap of paper,

no other notes. I had been reading a lot of Oriental philosophy, reading a lot of Zen Buddhism, reading the *I Ching*. That was the Marin County zeitgeist at that point, Zen Buddhism and the *I Ching*. I just started right out and kept on trucking. It was either that or go back to polishing jewelry.

When I had the manuscript finished, I showed it to her. She said, "It's all right, but you'll never make more than \$750 off of it. I don't even see where it's worth your while to submit it to your agent."

I said, "What the hell!" And *The Man in the High Castle* was bought by Putnam's for \$1500, which isn't a great deal more than she had prophesied. It did get tremendous reviews. Part of that was due to the good fortune that it was picked up by the Science Fiction Book Club. Had it not been picked up by them, it would not have won the Hugo Award, because the edition would have been too small.

I must admit that I had thought for years about writing an alternate-world novel in which the Axis won

World War II. I did start without written notes, but I had done seven years of research at the closed stacks in U.C.-Berkeley. And I looked at Gestapo documents, because I could read some German, marked "For the eyes of the higher police only."

I had to structure out the decisions that the Nazis would have had to make, the changes in history that would have permitted them to win that war. It would be a very long list of things that would have had to happen, and they're not all in *Man in the High Castle*. Just for example, Spain would've had to grant them the right to go through, you know, from France to take Gibraltar and close off the Mediterranean. That war was not really as close a call as we thought it was. I mean, it is just not that easy to defeat Russia—as certain people in history have found out. I hope we're not about to find that out ourselves.

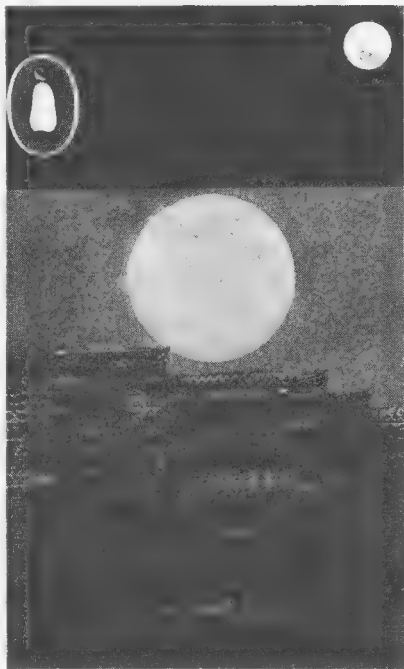
TZ: Let's get back to *Blade Runner*. What turned you 180 degrees in your attitude toward the production?

Dick: You know, I was so turned off by Hollywood. And they were really turned off by me. That insistence on my part of bringing out the original novel—and not doing the novelization—they were just furious. They finally recognized that there was a legitimate reason for reissuing the novel, even though it cost them money. It was a victory not just of contractual obligations but of theoretical principles.

And although this is speculation on my part, I think that one of the spin-offs was that they went back to the original novel. Because they knew it would be reissued, you see. So it is possible that it got fed back into the screenplay by a process of positive feedback. I was such a harsh critic of Hampton Fancher's original screenplay, and I was so outspoken, that the studio knows that my present attitude is sincere, that I'm not just hyping them. Because I was really angry and disgusted.

There were good things in Fancher's screenplay. It's like the story of the old lady who takes a ring into a jeweler to have the stone reset. And the jeweler scrapes all of the patina of years and years and shines it up, and she says, "My God, that was what I loved the ring for—the patina!" Okay, they had cleaned my book up of all of the subtleties and of the meaning. The

Philip K. Dick



"I started with nothing but the name 'Mister Tagomi' written on a scrap of paper." Dick's Hugo-winning novel *The Man in the High Castle* is set in an alternative universe in which the Axis powers have won World War II.

meaning was gone. It had become a fight between androids and a bounty hunter.

I had this vision in my mind then that I would go up there and be introduced to Ridley Scott, and be introduced to Harrison Ford, who's the lead character, and I'd just be so dazzled I'd be like Mr. Toad seeing the motorcar for the first time. My eyes would be wide as saucers and I'd just be standing there completely mesmerized. Then I would watch a scene being shot. And Harrison Ford would say, "Lower that blast-pistol or you're a dead android!" And I would just leap across that special effects set like a veritable gazelle and seize him by the throat and start battering him against the wall. They'd have to run in and throw a blanket over me and call the security guards to bring in the Thorazine. And I'd be screaming, "You've destroyed my book!"

That would be a little item in the newspaper: "Obscure Author Becomes Psychotic on H'wood Set; Minor Damage, Mostly to the Author." They'd have to ship me back to Orange County in a crate full of air holes. And I'd still be screaming.

I started drinking a whole lot of scotch. I went from a thimbleful to a jigger glass and finally to two wine glasses of scotch every night. Last Memorial Day I started bleeding, gastrointestinal bleeding. And it was because of drinking scotch and taking aspirin constantly and worrying about this whole goddamned thing. I said, "Hollywood is gonna kill me by remote control!"

One is always haunted by the specter of F. Scott Fitzgerald, who goes there and they just *grind him up*, like in a garbage disposal.

TZ: All of that changed when you saw David W. Peoples's revised screenplay?

Dick: I saw a segment of Douglas Trumbull's special effects for *Blade Runner* on the KNBC-TV news. I recognized it immediately. It was my own interior world. They caught it perfectly.

I wrote the station, and they sent the letter to the Ladd Company. They gave me the updated screenplay. I read it without knowing they had brought somebody else in. I couldn't believe what I was reading! It was simply sensational—still Hampton

disappointed when I read the first *Blade Runner* screenplay, because it was the absolute antithesis of what was done in *The Man Who Fell to Earth*. In other words, it was a destruction of the novel. But now, it's magic time. You read the screenplay and then you go to the novel, and it's like they're two halves to one meta-artwork, one meta-artifact. It's just exciting.

As my agent, Russell Galen, put it, "Whenever a Hollywood film adaptation of a book works, it is always a miracle." Because it just cannot really happen. It did happen with *The Man Who Fell to Earth* and it has happened with *Blade Runner*, I'm sure now.

TZ: It's great to hear that.

Dick: Oh, yeah. It's been the greatest thing for me. I was just destroyed at one point at the prospect of this awful thing that had happened to my work. I wouldn't go up there, I wouldn't talk to them, I wouldn't meet Ridley Scott. I was supposed to be wine and dined and everything, and I wouldn't go, I just wouldn't go. There was bad blood between us.

That David W. Peoples screenplay

"It guided me for a while. It has spoken to me sporadically since I was in high school. I expect that if a crisis arises it will say something again."

Fancher's screenplay, but miraculously transfigured, as it were. The whole thing had simply been rejuvenated in a very fundamental way.

After I finished reading the screenplay, I got the novel out and looked through it. The two reinforce each other, so that someone who started with the novel would enjoy the movie and someone who started with the movie would enjoy the novel. I was amazed that Peoples could get some of those scenes to work. It taught me things about writing that I didn't know.

The thing I had in mind all of the time, from the beginning of it, was *The Man Who Fell to Earth*. This was the paradigm. That's why I was so

changed my attitude. He had been working on the third *Star Wars* film, *Revenge of the Jedi*. The *Blade Runner* people hired him away temporarily to do the script by showing him my novel.

I'm now working very closely with the Ladd Company and, I'm on very good terms with them. In fact, that's one of the things that's worn me out. I've been so amped-up over *Blade Runner* I couldn't work on *The Owl in Daylight*.

I hear the film's going to have an old-fashioned gala premiere. It means I've got to buy—or rent—a black tuxedo, which I don't look forward to. That's not my style. I'm happier in a T-shirt. **17**



Blade Runner

HARRISON FORD CONFRONTS A WORLD OF RENEGADE ANDROIDS
IN RIDLEY SCOTT'S FILM OF THE PHILIP K. DICK NOVEL.
TZ'S JAMES VERNIERE REPORTS.

If alienation is the modern condition, then Philip K. Dick was its prophet. In his novels, which include *VALIS*, *Ubik*, *Through a Scanner Darkly*, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, and the classic *Man in the High Tower*, Dick created universes that are literally falling apart, where Americans are a powerless, colonized people, where radioactivity contaminates everything, where the fabric of space and time is rent, where a universal cancer infects all and reduces all to "kipple," and where humans cannot be distinguished from androids.

In keeping with the entropy motif of Dick's work, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* is a portrait of the slow death of the planet. It is, like the novels of British "new wave" writers Brian Aldiss and J.G. Ballard, a paranoid vision of the future. In Dick's case it is a future where, if paranoia and schizophrenia don't get you, the androids will.

To anyone familiar with Dick's work, the adaptability of *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* to the screen is obvious: It is on one level an action-packed

detective thriller, in which the protagonist is a bounty hunter named Rick Deckard who tracks down and kills androids who have infiltrated human society. On another level, it is a love story set against the backdrop of a grimly realistic future world.

Evidently screenwriter Hampton Fancher recognized the novel's potential as a feature film and arranged to do the first draft of a script. The result came to the attention of director Ridley Scott (*The Duellists*, *Alien*) and producer Michael Deeley (*The Deer Hunter*), and the twenty-million-dollar *Blade Runner* (the title actually comes from an sf novel by Alan E. Nourse) was on its way to the screen. The final product is slated to be released this May by the Ladd Company.

Like Dick's dystopian novel, *Blade Runner* is a hybrid, a product of the cross-fertilization of genres. It is at once a stunningly bleak vision of the near future set in the year 2020 and a hard-boiled detective thriller. In the opening of Scott's film, Rick Deckard, played by Harrison Ford of *Star Wars* and *Raiders of the Lost*

Blade Runner



In a downtown noodle bar, former "blade runner" Rick Deckard (Harrison Ford) is drafted out of retirement by Gaff (Edward James Olmos) and his old police unit.

Ark, is summoned from an early retirement by his old police unit, Rep-Detect (for "replicant detection") to hunt and kill five renegade replicants—the term "android" is not used in the film—who have escaped from their off-world colony. The cynical Deckard is solicited because he is the best "blade runner" (i.e., replicant exterminator) in the business. Deckard, who travels in a flying police car called a spinner, can expose someone as a replicant by testing him with a device called a Voight-Kampff machine, a futuristic polygraph that measures empathic levels. (Replicants, who are naturally solipsistic, must feign empathy.)

"Our main character," says director Ridley Scott, "is a detective like Sam Spade or Philip Marlowe, a man who follows a hunch to the end. He gets in trouble when he begins to identify with his quarry, the replicants. He possesses some of the dourness of Bogey, but he's more ambivalent, more human, almost an antihero."

Deckard's nemesis is a cunning and dangerous replicant named Roy Batty, played by Dutch actor Rutger Hauer, who scored in the U.S. as the heroic protagonist of *Soldier of Orange* and the bloodthirsty terrorist in *Nighthawks*. The replicants in *Blade Runner* are genetically engineered beings grown from human tissue cultures, and they are virtually indistinguishable from human beings. They are, however, much stronger and faster, and they come in combat models.

The most obvious digression from Dick's novel in the film is the filmmakers' decision to jettison the term "android" in favor of the tonier neologism "replicant."

"When we set out to do this film," says Scott, "we decided to make 'android' a taboo word. I said, 'Anybody who uses the word "android" gets his head broken with a baseball bat, okay?' Because it sets up all sorts of preconceptions of the kind of film this could be."

Co-scenarist David W. Peoples actually came up with the term. "I called up my oldest daughter, who majors in biochemistry," said Peoples. "We talked about androids, and she gave me some jargon which included the term 'replicate.' I wasn't really looking to replace the term 'android,' but it has been used an awful lot."

The setting of the story, too, has been altered. Dick's novel is set in a post-"World War Terminus" San



Deckard's adversary is Roy Batty (Rutger Hauer), leader of genetically engineered beings known as replicants.



Back in action, Deckard mans a Voight-Kampff machine, a futuristic polygraph which exposes replicants masquerading as humans.



Several renegade replicants pay a clandestine visit to Chew (James Hong) in his sub-zero lab, site of microsurgical genetic design work.



Deckard follows a lead down Animoid Row, where replicant animals are sold. Most real species are by now almost extinct.



Tyrell (Joe Turkel), head of a corporation that manufactures replicants, maintains a penthouse office atop a 700-story pyramid with his mysterious assistant Rachael (Sean Young).



Through the teeming streets, Deckard (page 51) pursues Zhora (Joanna Cassidy—above), an exotic entertainer and suspected replicant.

Francisco. In contrast to the film, the novel depicts a dwindling population. The surrounding area is a sterile wasteland of radioactive debris, and many of the survivors of the war have emigrated to off-world colonies. Almost all plant and animal life has been eradicated, and those who remain on Earth are continuously bathed in residual radioactivity. As a result, many are genetically damaged mutants derisively referred to as "chicken-heads." An idea that has been retained by the filmmakers is that most people are unhappy because life on Earth is for losers who can't afford the luxury of an off-world colony.

In the film, the setting is an unnamed future metropolis reminiscent of New York or Chicago. The switch was as much the daughter of necessity as it was a product of invention, since the filmmakers wanted to build their future city on top of an existing one, and such a set existed at Burbank Studios, where a complex known as "New York Street" was built years ago. (In fact, Humphrey Bogart worked on this set for Warner Brothers.)

As designed by Lawrence G. Paull, *Blade Runner* is a vision of the future as an urban nightmare. In the film, old-fashioned buildings have been "retro-fitted"—adapted for future use by adding new technology to existing structures. They form the foundation for a multilevel megastructure consisting of hundreds of floors of futuristic structures inlaid above ground level. The city in *Blade Runner* is a dense tangle of Byzantine canyons full of multilingual neon signs, milling crowds of predominantly Asian citizens, and crawling ground traffic. "Our concept," says Paull, "is that cities will start to deteriorate and the electrical, mechanical, and ventilating systems will break down. Rather than rebuild from scratch, we have decided to 'retro-fit.'"

Paull's crews not only "retro-fitted" the existing street set. They also added about three stories of futuristic structures on top of it. "I'd call it a production designer's dream and nightmare all at once," says Paull. The hundreds of levels above the third story were matted in by the Entertainment Effects Group, a facility formed by Douglas Trumbull (2001, *Star Trek*, *Close Encounters*), who supervised the film's special effects. Its final look



Danger lurks overhead as well as in the streets. In a climactic confrontation, Deckard chases Roy Batty among the ledges, eaves, and rooftops of Ridley Scott's infernal future city, where the height of one's apartment reflects one's social status.

has been playfully dubbed "retro deco" and "trash chic" by the filmmakers.

Blade Runner has already been described by some as a live-action *Heavy Metal* magazine, prompting a few to wonder if Ridley Scott might have been inspired by the future cities depicted by graphic illustrator Moebius, who designed the Samurai spacesuits for Scott's *Alien*. "Yes, there's a lot of *Heavy Metal* influence in the show," Paull admits. "As soon as I got involved in the project, Ridley laid out around fifteen *Heavy Metal* issues, and we took certain elements of scale and density from some of the cities in the magazine."

In fact, in 1977, Moebius and *Alien* scenarist Dan O'Bannon did a futuristic, Raymond Chandler-inspired detective story for *Heavy Metal* entitled "The Long Tomorrow," which featured a tough detective with a shaved head beset by shape-shifting aliens. "We went through that one extensively," says Paull. "There was a drawing of the city in that story that had a texture we liked." Coincidentally, in the early stages of *Blade Runner* there were rumors that Harrison Ford had shaved his head to play Deckard.

Like *Alien*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *Escape from New York* and *Cannery Row*, *Blade Runner* is an art-directed film, meticulously designed to reflect a particular look. In the case of *Blade Runner*, the costumes, for example, designed by Charles Knode and Michael Kaplan, are both realistically futuristic yet reminiscent of the 1940s, which is in keeping with the *film noir* look that Scott and his colleagues have tried to create.

If Swiss artist H. R. Giger is the spiritual father of

Alien's bioengineered hell, then the infernal city in *Blade Runner* is the soul child of artist-engineer Syd Mead, whose science fiction paintings can be seen in the 1980 art book *Sentinel*. Mead, who helped create the "V-ger" entity in the *Star Trek* movie, is a futurist designer who has worked for Chrysler, U.S. Steel, NASA, and Ford. He was initially hired to create vehicles for *Blade Runner*, but his role was expanded.

"I started by designing something we called 'the peoples' car,' as well as the taxis, the trucks, Deckard's sedan, and the spinners. But I soon started putting in background details that reflected the look of the setting," says Mead, who created the "retro-fit" look for the film and came up with windows that are actually video screens through which a viewer may gaze at whatever scene he likes without revealing the real urban blight outside. "It's like a cable tv service clamped on your window. It gives the buildings a strange, warehouse look."

Mead also conceived of layering new buildings on top of old. "Once you get past one hundred floors," he explains, "you need a whole new highway system. That's why the street scenes are so impacted—because the streets are practically underground, which accentuates the brutality."

What the makers of *Blade Runner* have attempted to create is a kind of archaeology of the future, in all of its vast multiplicity and wealth of detail, within the confines of an action-packed detective plot. If they succeed, serious students of science fiction will have reason to rejoice in the spring of '82. 17



Just in time for
Mother's Day...

3

Memorable
Moms

*Alan's
Mother*

by
Steve Rasnic Tem

*
**Home
Visit**

by
Roger Koch

*
Zombies

by
Dolly Ogawa

Alan's Mother

by Steve Rasmic Tem

SHE WAS WISE IN THE WAYS OF MAGIC, BUT SHE HAD SOMETHING MORE IMPORTANT TO TEACH: A LESSON IN REALITY.

He had just turned ten before the summer began that year, and for the fourth summer in a row he had left his father's home in the city to stay with his mother in a cottage by the dark green pond.

Years later he would doubt his memories of that time, and would wonder, after all, what had really occurred. This was the last summer Alan would believe his mother to be magical.

He did not understand his parents' divorce; when he was six his mother had come to him one day and explained it all, but he hadn't really understood what she was saying. He did remember that she had said his father did not like the things she wanted to do, and that this made her very unhappy. She said people owed it to themselves to do the things that made them happiest. That had made a lot of sense to him at the time, and when his father or others had criticized his mother for it, he had objected strongly. But then he couldn't understand why she didn't take him along with her, and he was always a little angry with her for that.

His mother's cottage was a beautiful place, with many flowers and animals and, of course, the dark green pond, which always seemed to hold your reflection a moment—an image clearer than any mirror's—before drawing it into the deep dark green of itself. As he stared into the water, Alan always felt that he was drowning, but for some reason it was a nice feeling, as if the pond were delivering him to some other, more beautiful world beneath the surface.

Sometimes the image of himself seemed older than he was by a week, by a year, by decades. The clothes would be different, or the willow tree hanging over him in the reflection would be showing signs of a different season from the one on his side of the reflecting surface. And one time the willow tree wasn't there at all, and the image in the water was that of an old, old man.

It had seemed, then, without a doubt, that his mother was magical. Each summer when she greeted him at the crossroads beyond her cottage,

she had presented him with a gift, and it was always the gift he had secretly wished for: a teddy bear, or a spin top, or the comic book he'd begged his father to buy him the previous week, only to see the last copy sold when he ran to the drugstore out of breath, the dime clutched in his anxious fist.

When he asked his mother how she knew, she always replied the same: "Mothers know everything." She'd laugh and he'd laugh too, but always a little more puzzled than before.

Another time she showed her magical powers was when he was sick or injured. There seemed to be nothing she couldn't cure. Her neighbors in this part of the country seemed to think this, too, and were always bringing rashes and bellyaches and broken bones for her to mend. She'd send them away with mixtures of herbs, homemade ointments, or sometimes even water from the dark green pond. And he never heard any of them say she hadn't cured them; all praised her abilities.

He remembered the day he had cut his hand badly on a piece of broken glass out by the crossroads. He knew he wasn't supposed to be playing out there—she'd always warned him against it—so he didn't want to come to her at first, afraid she'd punish him. Or perhaps she wouldn't cure it at all because he'd disobeyed her. Perhaps she'd even make it hurt worse. But it bled a great deal, all over his new blue shirt, and he was afraid he would die if he did not go to his mother.

He'd raced into the cottage crying hysterically, bare-chested, his bleeding hand wrapped in his new shirt. His mother had cried out in alarm and embraced him, stroked him, cooed to him—all this, even though he was bleeding over her. Her reaction pleased him and made him uneasy at the same time; she'd always seemed so calm and controlled about everything else.

After she had comforted him she'd taken him into her sitting room, and showed him a small, shiny wood table covered with a piece of red velvet. He was to lay the back of his hand on the velvet.

She took a jar of ground herbs off one of her



shelves and sprinkled the powder over his hand. Then she added a few drops of a blue liquid. Then she wrapped the velvet up around his hand and led him out by the pond, where she dipped his hand for several minutes.

Later he would try to understand exactly what had happened next. He remembered her taking the velvet and his bloodied bandage off immediately after pulling it out of the water. But it had to have been a period of weeks, he was sure, for the skin was completely healed. There wasn't even a scab.

His mother always seemed to know what he had been thinking back then. Later he would wonder if perhaps all little boys thought that of their mothers. He would always remember the day he had been so disappointed that he wouldn't be in the city for a friend's party and how his mother had surprised him with a big party in her cottage, with all the neighboring kids and some kids he couldn't recognize. It was funny, because he had thought he knew all the kids around there, and he never saw

those other kids again. But they had been especially nice to him.

And then his eleventh summer came, and everything was different after that.

The first thing he noticed was in the taxi on the way to the crossroads. He suddenly realized he wasn't all that excited about seeing his mother that year. It was his first year of eligibility for the baseball league at the city park, and he had to admit he'd really rather be playing baseball that summer. All the other boys had even made fun of him when he'd told them how he was spending the summer.

"Well, I don't *really* want to go. But my dad says I have to..." he'd told them, and his face had suddenly gone hot with shame. What if his mother knew *then*, what he had been thinking and saying? A chill played with his fingers, and he imagined her invisible form standing beside him, looking sadly down at him as a cold wind lifted her hair.

There was a lot to do in the city that summer, he had suddenly realized, and for the life of him he

couldn't remember doing anything those summers at his mother's that had been fun at all.

But he was proud of his new jeans, his baseball cap, the tennis shoes the big boys wore. He wasn't a little kid anymore; he wanted his mother to see that.

His mother was there at the crossroads to greet him, her tall dark gray form standing by the high embankment covered with dead weeds. He was almost startled to see her; she looked old, and he could not remember her looking old before. Her hair was gray, her face starkly shadowed, and as the cab pulled up beside her he could see lines in the shadows. Her once-smooth face was lined. And her characteristically stoic expression seemed one of sadness this time, as if a thin line of mood had been crossed in her advancing age.

He got out of the cab, and it sped off. He watched it leave, purposefully delaying the moment he must look her in the face. When he did turn and look up at his mother, she was holding something out to him. He had almost forgotten. It was his yearly gift.

"A slingshot?" he asked in surprise. She did not answer him, just slipped it into his hands. He stroked the hardwood handle. "How did you—" But something about her expression stopped his question.

It wasn't a toy, nothing like the ones he'd had before. He'd seen one just like it in one of his father's sporting goods catalogs. He'd wanted it badly ever since then: something he could show the other kids down at the park.

But his father had said it wasn't a toy; it was a hunting weapon. It wasn't for him. How did she know that was what he wanted? And moreover, why was she giving him this? He would have expected her not to approve.

His mother was looking at him sadly. And unlike any summer before, she did not take his hand when they left the crossroads for her cottage. But he was a big boy now; she must have seen that.

The cottage seemed much as he had remembered it: the lace tablecloth on the small table in her alcove she used for dining, the kitchen with its natural woods and cast iron, the fireplace of gray stone. But it was all smaller and older than it had been before, and there seemed nothing there that might interest him.

For the first time she fixed a dinner he did not enjoy. Why didn't she know he didn't like fish anymore?

And the story she read him that evening was one he'd become bored with a long time ago.

He could tell she was feeling the difference, too. All her smiles were sad ones this summer.

All summer he waited for his mother to do something special, magical. Neighbors still came to her for aid, and she gave them herbs and ointments

as before, but never did he see the miracles he remembered. How could he know if the people had been cured? They seemed satisfied with her help; people came back to her and no one ever appeared to complain. But he was losing confidence in her this year. Alan wanted proof.

Then one cool summer's morning Alan received his opportunity. He had been sitting down by the pond, picking up small pebbles and seeing how far he could shoot them. After weeks of practice he had gotten good enough to get them across the pond, where they landed on a large moss-covered rock with a satisfying thump. When that no longer was a challenge, he started aiming at the large and small trees which bordered the other side of the pond.

Suddenly he stopped; he thought he'd seen something in the weeds covering one small section of the far bank.

There it was again! Alan sat up on his heels. By squinting carefully he was able to focus in on one particular spot. It was a rabbit, brown with patches of gray.

Alan held his breath. He could not remember ever having seen a creature so beautiful. It was just like the rabbits in stores. In fact, he had a stuffed toy at home that looked much like it—though he didn't play with it very much anymore, because he was a big boy now, too big for that kind of toy.

He wanted it to come to him. He wanted it very badly.

The next thing he would remember was running around the edge of the pond, staring straight ahead at the clump of weeds where the rabbit had been. Then staring down at the still form, the mouth open over the teeth, the eyes glassy.

He'd scooped it up even though it smelled, and had raced all the way to his mother's cottage.

But she'd only looked at him in sadness, and at his precious slingshot he'd not forgotten even in his haste, stuffed into his front pocket. She shook her head slowly. "I cannot," she'd said. "I'm sorry, Alan."

"But you have to, you have to!" he'd cried, his face wet with tears. He wanted to stop his crying; how could he be a big boy and cry? But he couldn't stop. "You've always been able to fix things. Always."

"Do you still believe in my magic, Alan? Do you still believe those things?"

Dumbly he stared at her. And finally shook his head. "No . . ."

Alan never paid attention to the people visiting his mother for cures after that. Sometimes when a storekeeper in the nearby town would say, "Oh, you're the conjure woman's boy," he'd merely laugh, wondering how those grown-ups could be so gullible.



Zombies

by Dolly
Ogawa

IT WAS A REAL ROCKY HORROR SHOW— DIRECTED BY HIS OWN MOTHER!

I really dug being a Zombie, they're a group that's going places, they've got a bad sound. I dug the chicks too, the Zombies were getting it on with the chicks. It was bad.

Ma was so hyper about my amplifiers; the only kind of music she liked was quiet. I tried to be cool with her, after all, she is my mother, but we're not tuned in to the same scene. I ask you, how could she expect me to keep up my chops, when she wouldn't even let me turn up the amps? The old biddy got a headache every time I took out my axe.

She'd been a bitch about everything, she never smoked or drank anything stronger than tea; I watched her go completely bonkers over finding a little shit in my room. One time it was only a few seeds.

The last time she found my little stash of grass, coke and a couple of Ludes, she tried to call the law. I took the phone away from her and ripped

it out of the wall. She was screaming so much I had to smack her a couple of times to get her to shut up. I could see there was no point in hanging around and trying to explain her freakout to the neighbors, so I got my gear together and split.

I hung out with a guy in my group, the Zombies, and we were staying loaded and playing until his old lady split and he forgot to pay the electric bill. When I plugged in and couldn't get any amps, I decided to cut out.

It was close to my birthday, so I decided to butter the old bag up. If I couldn't move back in right away, I might be able to get some bread out of her to keep me going till the next gig, which didn't start for another two weeks. I could use some bucks. If I mention it in time, I might keep her from getting me a sweater or cologne or some other mother-type garbage.

I dialed the number, the phone rang a couple

of times, and then this deep-voiced old geezer answered.

"Hello, is Mrs. Jackson there?" I said, wondering who this was.

"No, she's not in at the moment, may I take a message?"

"Yeah man, tell her Sonny called and I'll call her back." I couldn't think of anything else I wanted to say to this voice. I wanted to ask who he was but probably I should let her answer that question.

Then I thought of something that made me laugh, maybe she got a live-in boyfriend when her Sonny split. That was too far out. First of all, who would want her aging carcass, and also she knew that I wouldn't dig it.

I went on to the rehearsal for the new gig. We've got a good group, they're really bad. Our whole trip is occult and weird, some mean music. The Blue Zombies are bad, really bad, and the chicks dig us. Man, all the Zombies have no trouble getting chicks.

We worked on the lights and the fluorescent makeup until it was ready. We put our speakers on all four sides and turned up the amps. We've got a wild sound. Danny, our lead guitar, writes most of what we do. We're getting a name around town. We've even been talking with some record company about a deal but it sounds too good, I hate to talk about it.

We wear these long black jackets and makeup, it looks weird; something between KISS and The Grateful Dead. We're into our own scene, though a lot of our stuff might be considered punk. We dig violence. I personally love it when it's bad and things start to happen. Making blood flow always made me feel great. I really dug being a Zombie.

By the end of the rehearsal I'm itching to call Ma back, I don't dig sleeping in my car with my axe and my clothes. I see this chick that's been hanging around a lot eyeing me, so I lay it on her. I need a place to crash for a couple of days and she looks like she's gonna go for it.

She says, "Sure, you can hang out at my pad. I just want you to know that I'm into leather."

That's cool with me. Hey, I don't put down anyone else's scene, man. It turns out she likes a little light strapping, and I dig giving strokes, I'm just not into receiving.

For a couple of days everything is cool, I'm even tripping on it. When I remember, I try to call home at different hours of the day and night but I can't seem to connect with Ma. Either the guy answers or nobody does.

Finally, on the third day Bitsy, that's the chick's name that I've been staying with, Bitsy tells me her old lady is coming back. Well, that scene's too kinky even for me, so I say later, and split.

**... as if you can just
push your own son,
your own flesh and blood,
out just like that.
She owes me, I haven't
had it easy, hell,
I'm only twenty-seven.**

Now then, I'm back on the street. Actually, I've got a little bread but I've been thinking of investing in a lid. I'd hate to have to spend the little money I've got on a pad. Besides, if I have to rent something it would be a dump and I like to live better, at least close to the beach.

So, I try calling her again, boy was I glad to hear her voice.

"Hey Mom, it's Sonny, your bad little kid. Where have you been?"

"Did you want something, Sonny?" Cold man, just like that, really cold.

"Hey Ma, I just want to know how are you, and how's everything, you know."

"Well, I'm fine, I'm very busy, but I'm glad you called, I wanted to tell you that I've rented your room, Sonny."

"Hey lady, that wasn't nice. That must be the old coot I talked to on the phone. I'll come over and give him notice to vacate. I need a place to stay, Ma. I'm on the street, sleeping in my car."

"No, son, sorry, but I've definitely decided not to live with you anymore. You'll just have to make other arrangements. I have to go now, I have something on the stove. Bye, dear."

The phone was dead in my hand. Boy, she was getting crazy in her old age, as if you can just push your own son, your own flesh and blood out, just like that. She owes me, I haven't had it easy, hell, I'm only twenty-seven. Well, it's not going to be just like that. I'm going over there and get this settled. First I'll get rid of that creep that's living there, I'll kick ass if I have to. Then I'll handle her.

She'll do things my way if I can talk to her in person. How would she like me to cut my wrists all over her carpet? Maybe I'll cut hers. My mind is working clickety-clack, clickety-clack. I can hardly wait to face these two. She sounded so brave on the phone, I'm betting she'll be a pushover in the flesh.

All the way over in the car I'm thinking about the nerve of her deciding she doesn't want to live with me. I didn't ask to be born. I don't dig it. Who asked her anyway? For chrissakes, she's my mother, who told her she has a choice? What the fuck are mothers for anyway? Shit, I'll fix her.

I'm hyper-mad when I pull up in front of the house. It's okay, in a dumb neighborhood, but the

yard is kind of cool. Ma does the work herself, it's good for her to keep busy. I don't think musicians should take chances with their hands by doing chores, yardwork, and repairs. I take good care of my hands, man.

The lights were on inside, she had the drapes open a little and I could see her sitting there watching tv. I couldn't see anybody else there, which was good. If I could talk to her alone first, soften her up and then show some balls with the tenant, I probably could get things moving without too much hassle.

I knocked on the door, politely, even though I felt like kicking it in. She made me wait for a minute, she turned down the tv and waddled around to answer the knock, finally.

"Sonny, I told you on the phone ..." She started to go on but I interrupted.

"Hey Ma, come on, don't I get to visit? I can at least visit, I can talk to you. Man, we don't have to live together to be friends." I could see her hesitate, but I was cool, I didn't even push against the door.

"I guess it would be all right, but just for a minute. I like to turn in early."

She let me in and I checked around, but no sign of the intruder.

"Where is everyone?"

"Oh, you mean the tenant. He's usually around. Maybe he's upstairs in his room."

Man, that pushed a button, his room, how could she? The hell it is, I thought, that room even has my initials carved in the windowsill.

"Hey Ma, you're really hurting me. You don't seem to understand that I don't dig a stranger calling that his room. I'm going up there and when I'm finished setting him straight you and I are gonna settle this, once and for all. This is Sonny's home, as much as it is yours and you'd better not forget it."

She didn't say anything, but this time she didn't shrivel up, looking scared to say anything either. I had a feeling that she was working on keeping a smile off her face. Loony tunes, for sure. Old age is like that. Hell, she must be more than fifty. Senile, that's what they call it.

I climbed the stairs, with my hand on the banister that I must have slid down a million times. It was pretty good being a kid in this place. She was easygoing then, I was the apple of her eye.

The door to my room was closed so that I had to knock. Mom didn't even tell me his name. No one ever told me his name and it doesn't matter. When he answered the door the light from the hall was all the light there was. It was dark in the room.

By the light from the hall I could see him and I could almost see through his skin. His yellow eyes were rimmed with red and I swear to god, his teeth were about an inch and a half long. He stood there

grinning at me out of a skull covered with greenish see-through skin, his eyes blazing in the dark.

Then he stuck out a hand, as if old Sonny here would shake hands with anything that had long twisted claws on it.

"You must be Sonny." He wasn't human, he was something else.

I backed off and started running, but halfway down the stairs I tripped and fell. My ankle was twisted so bad that I had to lay there catching my breath on the front porch before I could crawl out to my car.

He came down the stairs and went into the living room. I could hear him talking to Ma.

"Your son seemed to be in a hurry."

I heard her laugh, "Why are you so kind to me? Although I do appreciate it."

"Well, to tell you the truth, you remind me of my mother."

I crawled out to my car and I haven't been back since. If she wants to live with a fiend out of hell, instead of her only son, I don't care. I wouldn't go back if she begged me.

Sometimes I think about that guy, and what bothers me is that he looked like one of our group, or anyway, he looked like we're trying to look, only he wasn't trying. Can you dig it? Ever since, I feel kind of uncomfortable about the makeup and costume. Actually, I'm kind of looking around to find a different group. I don't really dig being a Zombie anymore. 17



Home Visit

by Roger Koch

THERE WAS SOMETHING SUBTLY WRONG OVER AT THE MARTIN PLACE . . .
AND THOSE DEAD RATS WERE THE LEAST OF IT!

The two women had left the welfare department ten minutes ago in Susan Donaldson's '73 Chevette. It was now a quarter till two; ninety-five degrees outside and a hundred and five in the Chevette. The pollution count was bad; the smoke from Susan's cigarette wasn't helping. On any other day like this one, Susan would have cut a few corners in her district and fled to her apartment where, by two-thirty at the latest, she'd be enjoying a beer, her mother's cream cheese dip, and a can of Pringles. But Margaret would keep her out today until at least four-thirty, and then Susan would have to drive her back to her car.

Susan didn't like having people in her car who weren't her friends. Margaret had a funny way of pursing her lips that distorted the bottom half of her face. She was doing it now, while dabbing an itchy eye with a Kleenex wrapped around her index finger.

"By the way," Margaret said, "I want to do

your evaluation on Monday."

Susan had been wondering when she was going to get around to that stupid sheet of multiple choice boxes: poor, below average, average, good, excellent, superior, perfect robot. Margaret's handwritten comment at the bottom of last year's report card had read: *Susan's attitude toward her job needs improving.*

Margaret Chandler had been her supervisor for five years; before that, a co-worker. They hadn't exactly seen eye to eye then, but sparks hadn't really started to fly until after Margaret's promotion, when it had become apparent to Susan that Margaret was too infested with the system. If she kept it up, Susan thought, she'd probably get a form *named* after her. She could smell the Xerox copies now, along with the air pollution.

Susan pretended she hadn't heard Margaret and changed the subject. "How often are they making you do these home visits with us workers?"



Home Visit

Margaret answered with her unflappable tone of voice. "They're not *making* us, Susan. It's not mandatory."

Sure, Susan thought, and this is Portland, Oregon. She was still stinging from the evaluation remark and wondered if all they did in those meetings was to teach each other how to time cracks like that one. She glanced down at her well-worn copy of *The Source* on the seat between them and tried to remember where she had left off. She couldn't.

They left the downtown area and crossed Liberty Street, which put them in what was known as Rhineland. Susan liked to call it "client heaven." On a scummy day like today this part of the city got to her the worst. It wasn't just the saloons and stripped cars along the streets, or the litter lying about as if a nationally televised parade had just passed through; there was also a pervading atmosphere of incest and degeneracy. Susan had seen enough inbreds that it was easy for her to imagine more: like the man shambling up Potter Street who turned his head and grinned as the Chevette sped past or the child peering through the window above a dirt-blackened furniture store; a child with no nose to speak of, just nostrils, and a twisted mouth. They came to an intersection and Susan flipped her cigarette into a gutter that smelled like something organic was rotting there. It's gotten worse over the years, she thought, really worse. She switched on a turn signal and headed in the direction of Pullman Street.

"First on the agenda is Arthur Hawkins, a real super guy."

"What seems to be the problem?" Margaret asked.

Susan eased over to the curb behind a rust-flecked pickup truck and pulled on the emergency brake.

"I've sent him two redetermination forms complete with return envelopes. No response. I've made two appointments to visit him. He wasn't home. I thought we'd pay him a little surprise today. Of course I'd rather just cancel the bastard."

Margaret shot her back a look that could have etched crystal at five hundred yards. "Of course you would, Susan, but that's not what the agency is paying you to do, is it?"

"The agency isn't paying me enough to do anything," Susan muttered. "Lock your door."

They walked up two short flights of concrete steps. Susan held her black notebook tight against her blue-jean jumpsuit. Jesus it's hot, she thought. Just perfect for a sweaty little scene among the roaches. She hoped Hawkins wouldn't be home.

They stepped onto the porch of a dilapidated two-story Victorian. Susan saw something move

through the screen door. Margaret saw it too and stopped dead in her tracks. It was a huge short-haired dog with pointy ears, standing taut as a drawn bow and not making a sound. Then Hawkins lumbered up behind it. He was a big man wearing a T-shirt, looking, and probably smelling, Susan thought, like old Swiss cheese.

"Yeah, who are you?"

"Miss Donaldson. I'm from the welfare department."

He waited.

"And this is Miz Chandler. Also from the welfare department."

"Okay, come in," said Hawkins. He made no attempt to shield them from the dog.

They stepped into the living room. It looked like someone had gotten about halfway through repapering the walls and then quit—about ten years ago. Susan sat down on a cloth-covered sofa, as far down from Hawkins as she could manage. Margaret sat in a well-worn easy chair and nervously spread out her dress, keeping both eyes on the dog. Susan kind of enjoyed that until she saw a roach scuttle over her right knee. She flicked it across the room.

"Mr. Hawkins, you haven't sent in your redetermination forms."

Hawkins leaned forward. His stomach rolls rubbed together like weiner-shaped balloons. He rubbed patches of beard stubble with the back of a hand. "Wait a minute . . . Chandler . . . you're the one I was gonna call on Monday. You're her supervisor, ain'tcha?" He nodded at Susan.

Margaret looked concerned. "Yes. What did you want to call *me* about?" She shot another laser beam at Susan.

Arthur Hawkins was smarter than Susan had thought.

"I've been tryin' to call Miss . . . uh . . . Donaldson for days. All I get is 'She's away from her desk.' I complained to the secretary and she gave me your number."

Margaret was in full control now. "It seems, Susan, that you've been having your calls held again."

Susan tried to build a wall around herself.

"It seems, Susan, that we're going to have to move your desk to wherever it is you *are*. Give Mr. Hawkins the form."

Susan prickled all over. She pulled a yellow sheet out of her notebook and handed it to Hawkins.

Margaret stared at her. "*Someone* will be back next week to look it over and pick it up. Thank you, Mr. Hawkins."

Margaret headed for the door, stepping around the dog. As Susan got up, she caught a glimpse of Hawkins' small son standing in the kitchen shadows between lines of wash.

**Margaret sat in
a well-worn easy chair
and nervously spread
out her dress, keeping
both eyes on the dog.
Susan kind of enjoyed
that until she saw
a roach scuttle over
her right knee.**

The heat had turned the parked Chevette into a Kelvinator at four hundred and fifty. Susan opened her notebook and jotted down the day's date. Then she wrote: *H. V. Arthur Hawkins—left re-form. Supervisor Chandler present.* She underlined the last three words five times.

"You didn't even ask him why he wanted to call me. Can't you see he was making the whole thing up?"

Margaret rummaged through her purse for more Kleenex. "We'll discuss this on Monday. Let's go on."

Susan turned the hot steering wheel. "What would you think if I told you something else about Arthur Hawkins? His wife was one of my clients two years ago. She said he'd tried to rape their daughter twice—in the bathroom."

"I said we'll discuss it on Monday during your evaluation." Margaret snapped her purse shut and set her mouth.

There were two more scheduled visits. At Lula Mae Palmer's house, a child swung on the once-decorative iron gate in front—but Lula Mae was not at home. They were now on their way to Alice Parker's apartment on Peach Street. Margaret said something, but all Susan heard was the word *agency*.

"You're not listening, Susan. We need to talk seriously on Monday and I think you know why."

"All right Margaret, so you think my attitude stinks. I'm not entitled to give any opinions, especially on things like that damned school worker calling me instead of the truant officer—"

She instantly regretted her words and almost slapped herself. Janie Sue Martin was the last client she even wanted to *think* about until Monday—or forever for that matter. But Margaret had heard enough.

"What about the Martin case, Susan? You haven't done any followup on it. The school has been reporting the absence of the Martin children for three days now."

Susan couldn't check her response. "For Christ's sake, do you know how many cases I've got? Don't they ever call truant officers anymore? I've got enough to do without doing someone else's job."

"I don't think that's what the agency has in mind."

She could feel the chill of Margaret's words as a sweat drop nestled into the corner of her eye. Calm down, Susie, she thought, you're going about this the wrong way.

"She's scary, Margaret. She looks like a genetic mistake; like the result of a whole generation of inbreeding. She came to the office last year. You were off that day but just ask the others. Ask Halliday if he remembers. She crept out the whole floor. Her eyes were opaque and her hair stringy like an old corpse. Her mouth was all sunk in and—"

"Susan, that will be enough! We have more to discuss on Monday than I thought."

Susan relinquished and turned left at the intersection of Peach. Alice Parker was one of Susan's more talkative clients; a bit touched, as they say, a counselor's nightmare. Susan always dreaded her visits with Alice. On the last one, the woman had pinned her down for an hour and a half, crying about her life and her family who didn't care. But now Susan felt relieved she had made another appointment for today. By the time they would get away from Alice, Margaret would be ready to get back to her car and the Martin case could be indefinitely postponed. Thank God it's Friday, she thought.

Alice Parker's apartment was in a cement-block complex that looked like a bombed-out school building. They walked past a row of broken mailboxes, stepping over splintered two-by-fours and pieces of pop bottles.

"Here it is. Number three," Susan said. She could hear a television through the apartment door. She gave her customary three quick knocks. Someone on the television said *I'll take women in film for a hundred, Jack.* She knocked again. *Come on Jokers,* said the television. Come on, Alice, Susan thought. She knocked again.

"I don't think she's home," said Margaret.

Susan fought back an overpowering urge to strangle. "She *has* to be home. She looks *forward* to my visits. She *knows* I'm coming today." Nice going, she thought. Of all the times to break an appointment it has to be today, you stupid fucking whining bitch.

The door to the adjoining apartment opened and a woman in a robe and shower thongs leaned into the hallway.

"She ain't home. She got sick and somebody came to get her."

Susan looked into the apartment and saw a

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bunch of men playing cards in the kitchen. Two naked children were crawling under the table.

"Yes. Thank you. Do you know where they took her?"

"Nope," said the woman. Then she closed the door.

Susan let out a deep breath and tried to smile it off. "Well I guess that's that. I'll see what I can find out next week." She hated herself for even trying to score any last-minute points with Margaret.

They went back to the car in silence. Susan began to scribble in her notebook and noticed that her pen was shaking like the needle of an oscilloscope. She tried to peek at her watch, but her left arm wouldn't cooperate.

Margaret fanned herself with a copy of the staff newsletter. "It's only ten minutes to three. I think we'd better try a visit to the Martin woman."

Susan flushed. "Why don't we go back to the office. You could even start my evaluation if you—"

"Susan, we already signed out WNR."

WNR stood for "will not return." If she could find another job she'd paint those stupid letters on the top of her desk.

"Then let's go have a beer. Christ, Margaret, you're human too, aren't you? You're hot and sweaty. You've put in your week. And you've gotten what you wanted out of me this afternoon."

Margaret raised both eyebrows and smiled like a dentist to a frightened patient.

So much for the human part, thought Susan. Now she'd really asked for it. She tried to think how Jake or anybody at the Riverview could convince her that she hadn't really blown it this time. And to top it all off, there was no way of getting out of the visit to Janie Sue Martin and maybe even all of her five children. It suddenly occurred to her that something about what she had just thought didn't sound right. Then she remembered. Six. There were six children now. She had received that anonymous call from a woman in the neighborhood claiming that Janie Sue Martin was pregnant. Susan had picked up a kind of edginess from the caller as if she were suggesting Susan do something about it. Then she'd hung up and all Susan could think of was who in the world could ever have gotten it up for Janie Sue? It was impossible—but so was immaculate conception. And Janie Sue already had five kids. Susan shivered. Last month, the anonymous neighbor had called back saying the child had been born. Susan had reluctantly trudged herself and her "attitude" up to Water Street for a visit—but that was as far as she'd gone. When she'd seen where she had to go to get to Janie Sue's house, she'd quickly changed her plans. The house was on the slope of a hill; it had rained that day, and the only way down was a steep path of soupy mud through several other backyards.

The one consoling thought she had was that at least Margaret would have to cope with the visit, too. As they came closer to Water Street, Susan tried to deal with her anxiety. Margaret wasn't enjoying this any more than she was, except that she knew she was getting to Susan. All the other workers had cases they ignored, but nothing was usually said about it unless the supervisor had it in for the worker. So why not let her suffer too? If she talked Margaret out of the visit, she would have to make it alone next week. She gloated: *Either I suffer through this alone next week or you suffer through it with me today, you bitch.*

It was after they parked and got out of the car that Margaret began to show signs of weakening. Water Street came to an abrupt end a few hundred feet ahead. It began again at the bottom of the hillside, down by the river. Margaret looked down at the obstacle course that lay ahead of them and frowned. Susan pointed to the Martin house. It looked like something one would find deep in the Okefenokee swamp at night: a twisted, sinking shamble of a house.

"That's it," Susan said.

Margaret stood transfixed and spoke softly with genuine human emotion. "Where are all the people who condemn buildings like these?"

Susan snickered. "They're all in meetings trying to decide when to have their next one. Gee, Margaret, you should have worn your jeans. Come on. I'm not working overtime."

They started down the path.

From a back window of one of the houses that faced on Water Street someone stared at them.

"Don't look now, Margaret, but I think we're being watched."

By the time Margaret found the window there were two more faces.

"Makes you feel right at home, doesn't it?"

Susan was now about five yards ahead of her. No sir, not a fun day for you, is it, Maggie old girl, Susan thought. She was beginning to enjoy herself.

They crossed under three washlines and passed an evil-smelling pile of trash. Susan thought of "Heap," an old *Mad Magazine* takeoff on horror movies about a polluted heap of garbage taking human form and mulching through the Okefenokee. On her left she saw a small boy crawling through a twisted maze of corrugated sheet metal. He didn't have a nose; one of the Martin children.

She was about to point him out to Margaret when a huge German shepherd sprang off the ground, inches from Margaret's face. It nearly broke its neck on the heavy chain. Margaret gasped and fell forward onto the path. She clutched her face and rolled over twice. The shepherd made the same leap



over and over, but the chain was securely fixed to a corkscrew in the ground.

Susan flinched but stood her ground. "He can't get you. You okay?"

Margaret got up and smoothed out her cotton-polyester dress. Her right palm was scraped and both knees were dirty. She looked like a six-year-old on a Sunday picnic.

Susan squinted at her through the afternoon sun. "You just going to stand there or what?"

Margaret looked at the dog on the straining chain, set her mouth, and started walking toward Susan.

Then the Martin boy darted out of the sheet metal, clutching a stiff six-inch rat by its tail. Margaret gasped again. The boy stopped and stared at them with opaque blue eyes. Margaret took three steps backwards. The boy turned, scampered up the Martin porch, and disappeared through the door. Susan saw Margaret go pale. Cute little bugger, isn't he, she thought. Betcha can't wait to meet his mom.

Margaret's voice betrayed some good old-fashioned panic. "I think we'd better go back, Susan."

Susan felt herself coming to a boil. "But what would the *agency* say, Margaret? Is that *really* what they'd have in mind?" She spat out the words like an overheated actress doing Edward Albee.

Susan stepped onto the porch. The wood felt soft and splintery like fallen palm leaves after a light rain. Susan saw Margaret's hateful stare and thought of the impending evaluation on Monday; only one winner would walk out of the office. Susan could almost taste victory.

"Come on. We have a job to do."

Margaret came up on the porch.

Susan knocked on the open door. There appeared to be no one in the front room. She stepped inside. Kids staying home from school and playing with dead rats: a day in the life of a social worker, she thought. Yuk.

There was a couch and two chairs. Stuffing

bubbled out of the cushions like pus. On the floor, directly in front of her, was a pile of dung. Susan thought of the old joke the right-wingers at the employment office liked to tell about the clients: *My landlord don't do nuthin'. My kid crapped in the hall three days ago and he ain't cleaned it up yet.*

Margaret stood in the doorway.

Susan held a finger to her lips. A sound, like a dog lapping up water, was coming from one of the bedrooms. She moved toward it.

"My God, Susan! Don't go in there!" Margaret was losing her voice. She ran to Susan and grabbed her by the jumpsuit.

For an instant they both looked into the bedroom. Margaret screamed and dug her fingers into Susan's neck. What they saw was impossible. The thing in the bed with Janie Sue, gnawing and sucking on a dead rat, was far worse than anything Susan had ever seen. It made the rest of the brood look like the Von Trapp children, as they stood around the bed, beaming at their mom; each of them holding ... offering ... dead rats by the tails.

Margaret dashed back across the living room—but not quite all the way. Floor planks splintered and then gave way. She reached up and grabbed at nothing. A balled-up Kleenex dropped as she opened her fist. Then she was gone, and her scream, before she hit bottom, carbonated Susan's blood.

In the next moment Susan made her biggest mistake of the day. She stopped at the edge of the hole, trying to see if Margaret was all right. Stupid-assed Margaret. She couldn't see anything, but the corner of her eye caught the Martin children, now ratless, scuttling through the bedroom door. She flailed out at the oldest and struck him on the side of his head. The notebook fell out of her hand. Arms circled around her legs like tentacles around a deep-sea diver.

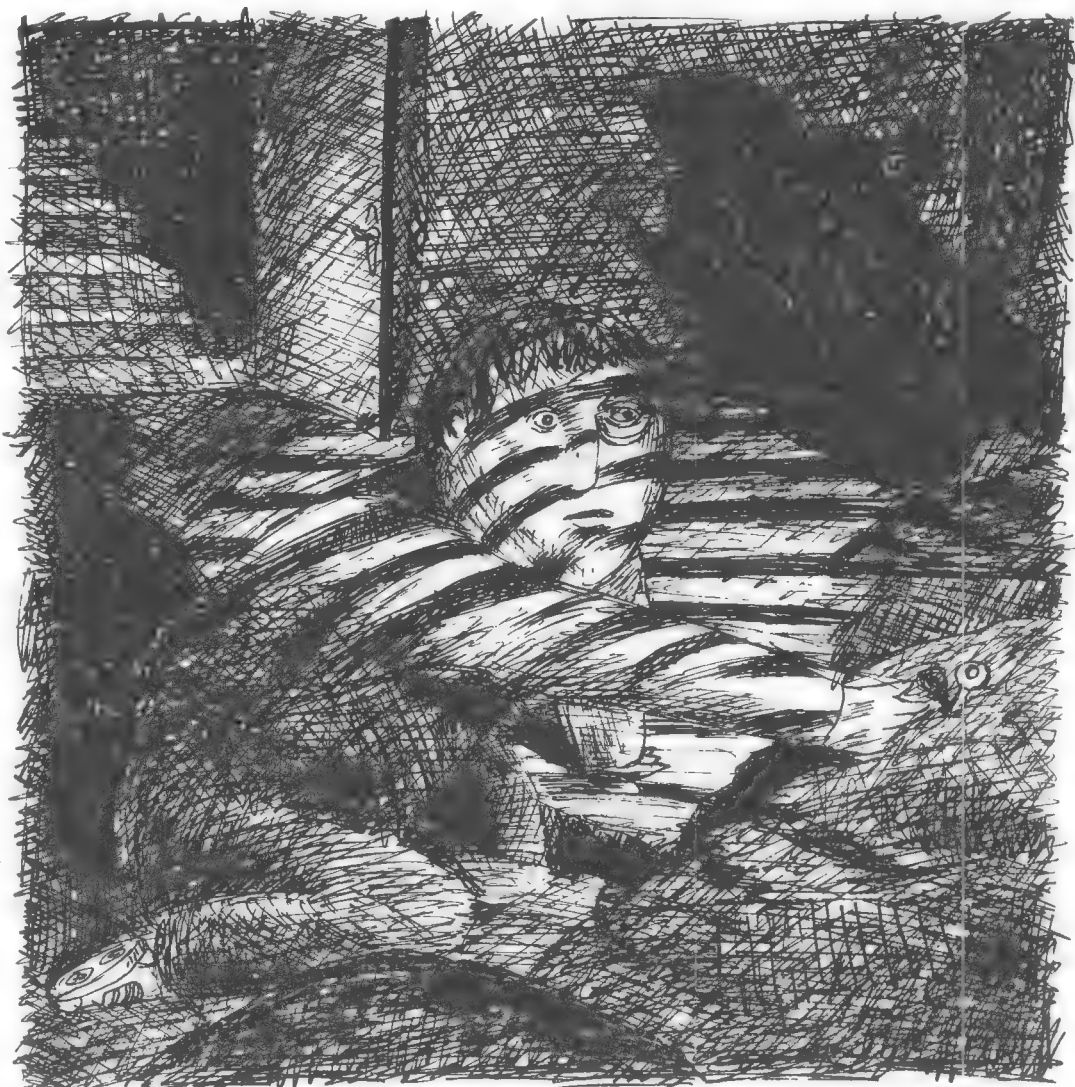
She cried out, "No! Holy Jesus God in Heaven no!"

She went through the hole head first and landed on Margaret's breast, which already teemed with tickling, invisible roaches. Margaret was either dead or in shock; she didn't make a sound. Susan slapped away in a frenzy at the roaches, making sounds in her throat she'd never made before.

It didn't take long for her eyes to see through the darkness of the cellar and pick out the thing that was crawling in her direction. She screamed and looked up through the hole. Janie Sue and her children peered down at her with toothless fascination. As the foul shape reached her and chomped through her leg, all she could think of was the children ... and how they favored their mom.

Not like the thing in the bedroom ... which was the spitting image of its dad. 17

WAS SHE A WITCH, OR JUST A CRAZY OLD LADY?
THE ANSWER (ENOUGH TO MAKE YOU SCREAM)
LAY HIDDEN IN THE DARKNESS OF . . .



Mrs. Halfbooger's Basement

by Lawrence C. Connolly

It was early summer. It was early night. And Mrs. Halfbooger hadn't been out of the house in nearly a week, the group of nine-year-old boys noticed.

Buckeye was thinking seriously about going home when Max Swarison got the window open. Lanny Rosenberg looked at Max's puffed cheeks, then up at the window, then back at Max. "Can't you do any better?"

Max stopped straining against the window and looked down at Lanny like he was looking at a maggot. "Maybe you can do better, booger face."

"Maybe I can but don't want to."

"Maybe I can come down there and break your nose." Max was standing on an old 7-Up case that Buckeye had found lying by the creek. Buckeye had picked it up, figuring it was valuable, but Max had taken it from him. Max was one of the bad things that had entered Buckeye's life since being thrown out of Mother of Christ Elementary School. If it hadn't been for Max, Thomas Edison Elementary might have been heaven. Most of the new friends he'd met there were pretty wimpy, except for Max.

"Sure don't look very wide, Max," said Willy Haynek, standing on his toes to get a look at the open window.

Max gave another push. "I think it's warped, or something."

"Can you get through?" asked Lanny.

"What do I look like? A rail?"

"What about Sean?" asked Lanny. "I bet Sean could get through."

Max smiled. "Hey, yeah." He looked around. "Hey, Buckeye! What're you doing over there, Buckeye?"

That was another thing Buckeye didn't like about Max. Max called him Buckeye like it was something creepy, and it made him feel like a weirdo every time the fat kid said it. He was beginning to wish he'd never told anyone at Edison that his old friends had called him Buckeye.

Not that it mattered. Max went through life looking for things to pick on, and Buckeye, who'd had an accident with a garden rake a few years back, was an easy mark. It's hard not to be obvious with a left eye that looks like a horse chestnut.

"Hey, Buckeye! You dreaming, or what? Get over here."

"What?"

"You're going inside," said Max.

Buckeye looked at the tight space between window and window sill. The light was bad. The sun had gone down. The round summer moon wasn't up yet. And there wasn't much to see—a thin strip of darker shadow in the dusk-gray wall of old Mrs. Halfbooger's house.

The house was an old thing with peeling wood and sagging gutters. And it leaned—though that wasn't so noticeable up close. Up close it just looked old—almost as old as Mrs. Halfbooger, who was at least a hundred. You could tell she was a hundred by the way she walked. Mrs. Halfbooger was the stoop-iest woman in West Fenton.

The four of them had been watching her nearly three weeks now, sitting across the creek, on a tree-covered hill almost as high as the one Mrs. Halfbooger lived on. They would sit in Lanny's tree fort, drink Orange Crush, and fight over Buckeye's telescope.

There wasn't much to see. Her name was Eva Hofburger. Calling her Halfbooger had started as a joke. No one laughed at the joke anymore, but the name lingered out of habit.

She was fifteen years a widow and all her life lonely. Albert Hofburger had "lived away" for the better part of the marriage. They had no children. And all the boys ever got to see from their across-the-creek tree fort were the comings and goings of an old, empty-eyed woman. Sometimes she would return home carrying packages from Kiddy Mart. Other times she would go out an hour or so before dark and not return until after the boys had gone home ...

But these were mysteries too mundane for nine-year-old boys looking to fill an empty summer. They watched her because the tree fort made it handy. They made her a witch because she was old.

They would watch her driving away, spotted hand perched on the steering wheel of her '47 Buick, and they would scare themselves silly with made-up stories about where she was going—about things she was going to do. They filled their stories with monsters, and ghouls, and werewolves, and bloodsuckers ...

But they didn't start getting close to the real horror until one day when Mrs. Halfbooger didn't go out. That had been Tuesday.

They didn't see her Wednesday either.

They saw her Thursday evening. She came out dressed in neat old-lady clothes and stood by the Buick. She looked sick. Lanny had the telescope, but the other three could tell just as well without it. She put her hand on the hood and stared down the hill, out toward the road that led to Kiddy Mart, out at the setting sun and the hazy glow that was Philadelphia. She stood that way a long time. Then she wiped her eyes and went back inside.

She didn't come out Friday.

Saturday it rained. The tree fort didn't have a roof, so they got together at Willy's and told stories about her.

When she didn't come out Sunday, Max said they ought to go see if she was dead. But they didn't.

Nor did they go when she didn't come out Monday.

But when it was Tuesday again—when the long boring afternoon began fading to dusk, they decided to have a look. And a look was all it was supposed to have been until Max got the window open.

Buckeye stared at the window and wondered if being part of this was such a good idea.

"I don't think I'll fit, Max."

"Don't be a creep. You haven't even tried."

"What am I supposed to do if I get in there?"

Max jumped down from the 7-Up case. He was fat—probably the fattest kid Buckeye had ever seen. There were a few older kids at Edison who could get away with calling him Maximum Swanson or even Tiny Tuba. But the only nine-year-old who'd ever tried it had ended up having to eat a green fly before Max would get off him. That kid had been Buckeye. And the green fly had been worth it.

"When you get in there," said Max, "you open the front door and let us in."

"What if it won't open?" said Buckeye.

"Don't be stupid. It's a door, isn't it? It's just locked—that's all. All you have to do is slide inside and unlock it."

Mrs. Halfbooger's Basement

"Maybe he doesn't want to," said Willy, who'd been looking at the house and thinking there might be Dangerous Things inside. Dangerous Things to Willy usually meant animals. It didn't matter what kind. If it was larger than a squirrel it was a Dangerous Thing.

But Max wasn't taking arguments. His arms were already wrapping around Buckeye. "Naw, he wants to go in there. Don't you, Buckeye?" Max heaved him up and set him on the 7-Up case. Buckeye looked down and saw the red-lettered slogan between his summer-torn sneakers: YOU LIKE IT, IT LIKES YOU.

He looked through the open space below the window. "It smells funny in there."

"C'mon, Buckeye. Try it!"

Buckeye stuck his head through the crack. The room smelled old.

"What do you see?" asked Willy.

Buckeye looked through the dimness. The room was full of old furniture. A table. Chairs. A sofa with its insides starting to come through. The wallpaper was water-stained—in some places it had crumbled away. Flaking paint hung from the ceiling. The floor was bare, and in it, below the window, was a grill-covered hole that went through to what looked to be the basement.

"Looks spooky," said Buckeye.

"Can you get through?" said Max.

"I don't know. It's awful tight."

"Like fun!" said Max, and Buckeye felt the fat boy's hands close on his ankles, lifting him off the pop case.

"Hey!"

Buckeye slid forward until he dangled from the waist, looking down at the floor. Something slipped from his shirt pocket. It fell, landed on the floor, stood on edge ... It teetered, a one-legged dancer going off balance. And then it fell—sideways, right through the grill-covered hole in the floor.

"My key!"

"What'd he say?" asked Max.

"Monkey!" shrieked Willy, thinking of Dangerous Things.

Max climbed up beside Buckeye, looking through the dirty glass. "There ain't no monkey in there."

Buckeye knew there was no way out of it now. He was going inside. The key was his mother's only one to the front door. She'd given it to him earlier that day so he could let himself in while she was up the street having tea with Mrs. Gruber. It was a silly thing, always having to lock the door. His mother was a lot like Willy. Everything scared her—especially things she read in the newspaper. Lately she'd been worrying about

Buckeye not being home by eight-thirty each night. It had something to do with the Philadelphia Missing Persons Bureau not being able to locate some missing kids. Usually Buckeye got in the house at a quarter to nine, and usually he got strapped for it. He wished his mom would stop reading the paper.

And he wished he'd remembered to return the key when she'd gotten back from Mrs. Gruber's.

"I said, my *key*. It fell through the floor."

She was going to kill him this time. She was going to take the television and pitch his comic books. She was going to put a lock on his bike and make him be an altar boy like wimpy Stevie Steedle. She was going to come down on him the same way she had the morning after he and Timmy Baker broke into the Catholic school looking for vampires—only this time it was going to be worse ...

He didn't realize he was all the way inside the house until he turned around and saw Max staring at him through the dirty window.

"He got through," Max was saying. "You see that? The little creep went right through."

Buckeye looked around. The room looked creepier from all the way in. There was a closed-up smell, like the room was full of last year's air.

He got on his knees and looked through the grill on the floor—nothing there. Nothing but darkness. He was going to have to look in the basement.

Max banged on the window. "Hey, Buckeye! How about the door?"

He looked up. All three boys were standing on the pop case now—their faces pressed against the dirty glass. Willy was on one side, his uncombed hair sticking out everywhere. He looked scared. Lanny was on the other side, looking more sure of himself. Max was in the middle. Buckeye thought they looked like Moe, Larry, and Curly.

"C'mon, creepo! The door!"

He stepped out of the room and moved into a wide hall. There was a light switch on the wall. He snapped it. A bulb came on in the high ceiling. Weak forty-watt light oozed down the faded walls, spreading out over the floor. He could see the wallpaper design dimly now. It was a flower design, flowers and children dancing in floor-to-ceiling helices—all but scrubbed away from too many washings. The ceiling was the same as the other room's, cracked and peeling. The floor was the same too, bare and wooden.

He came to the front door, wrapped his hands around the knob and tried turning. It wouldn't turn. He tried pulling. Pulling didn't work either. He kicked it with his foot and hit it with his hand. No good. It was locked on both sides.

He kicked it again. It was like kicking a tree.

Buckeye went back to the window.

"It won't open," he said.

Willy was on one side. . .

He looked scared.

Lanny was on the other side, looking more sure of himself.

Max was in the middle.

Buckeye thought they looked like Moe, Larry, and Curly.

Max looked mad. Lanny and Willy looked ready to leave.

Max said, "Maybe we should smash in the window."

"Isn't that against the law?" said Willy. And, when Max didn't answer: "I'm going home."

"Hey, wait a minute!" Buckeye leaned out the window. "We gotta find my key."

"How're we gonna do that if you won't let us in?" said Max.

Willy said, "Let's go home, Max."

Max pretended he didn't hear. "What's it like in there, Buckeye?"

"Just an old house."

"Is the witch in there?"

"I didn't see her."

"This isn't even fun," said Lanny, who was now standing where, a short time ago, Buckeye had been thinking about going home. "Come on, Sean. Get out of there and let's go."

"But my key!" said Buckeye.

"Is it that important?" asked Willy.

"They'll kill me!" he said.

"You guys are a bunch of queers," said Max.

"Okay," said Lanny. "We'll wait for you."

"Hurry," said Willy. "I don't like it here."

"I don't like your face," said Max.

And Buckeye slid his shoulders and head back through the window. He looked one more time through the glass, then turned back into the hall, wondering why this stuff always happened to him.

This time he turned the other way, moving deeper into the house, passing a dark second-floor stairway. There was a room at the end of the hall. The weak ceiling light spilled into it, and he could see a table, some cabinets, and—dimly at first—hear water running. He thought of turning back, forgetting the key, taking his chances at home . . .

The water stopped running. Footsteps moved toward the hall. A little face peeked around the door.

For a brief, gut-stabbing moment, Buckeye was sure he was going to pee his pants. Then the initial fear vanished, and, as the after-shocks echoed through him, he realized it was a little girl.

They looked at each other for a long time. Buckeye expected her to call the old woman. But she didn't. She only stood there, and finally she asked,

"Are you new?"

"Huh?"

"What happened to your eye?"

Her hair was dark. She was pretty. "I had a fight with a vulture," he said. It was the usual story he used to impress people. "I had to break its neck."

"Oh." She had a glass of water in her hand. She drank some and poured the rest on the floor. "I heard you moving around. I thought maybe you were Billy or Paul. But I don't know you."

"I just got here."

"You didn't come with her?"

"I came with Max."

"Max Palmer?" she asked.

"Uh-uh. Max Swanson."

"I don't know him either."

"I—I'm really not supposed to be here," he said. "I lost my mom's key, see. And I think it fell into your basement."

She looked confused.

"It was Max's idea," he said. "I wouldn't even be here except he couldn't fit through the window . . . Could you show me where the basement is?"

"You don't know?"

"No."

"Oh, my."

Laughter rolled from the upstairs.

Four boys came tumbling down the steps. Three were riding pillows, one was riding the banister. They got to the bottom and started pelting one another with the pillows.

They stopped when they saw Buckeye.

"What happened to your eye?"

"A vulture," said the girl.

There were more questions, almost identical to the girl's.

One of the boys took out a crayon and started drawing on the wall. Buckeye watched. The crayon made a big face with a long nose, squinty eyes, glasses—it was the old woman.

Buckeye asked, "Won't you get in trouble?"

The face had big lips and a long tongue. The tongue stuck straight out, catching snot from the running nose. The artist said, "What's she going to do to us?"

"You ought to go upstairs," said another. "She's still in bed. Dying maybe."

"Is she your grandmother?" asked Buckeye.

"Naw," said another. "She'd just like to be. Silly old bag. Did you really come through the window?"

"Yeah."

"Then for sure you have to go up there. You'll scare the daylight out of her, I bet. Get up real close and look at her with your eye. Can you see through it?"

"No."

Mrs. Halfbooger's Basement

"Then just pretend. She hasn't given a good yell all day."

Buckeye looked at the stairs.

"Go on."

There was more laughter upstairs. Girls and boys.

"I've really got to get my key."

"I'll get it for you," said the girl. "You go up."

"She won't be mad?" he asked. "I mean, I sort of broke in."

"But that's the idea," said the boy with the crayon. "The idea is to get her mad. The old creep."

Buckeye looked up the stairs. The boys got behind him and started pushing. And before he knew it, he was starting up.

The stairs were narrow and full of the same stuffy smell he'd noticed when first coming into the house. He turned on another light and saw that the stairway walls were covered with more drawings. He moved past them, stepping into the second-floor hall just as another band of kids burst through a door at the hall's end. They plowed into him, grabbing the banister, making screeching-tire sounds as they turned, starting down. One of the kids looked at him and stopped. "Oh, we got her good this time. Boy, did we ever!"

And then they were gone, tumbling down, spilling into the first floor, laughing, screaming, yelling.

Buckeye looked at the open door down the hall and turned on another light. There was writing on the wall beside the door—large letters in black crayon: HOME OF THE CAVE HOG.

He moved toward it, set his hand on the door, and peeked inside. Mrs. Halfbooger lay in bed, looking old and sick. There was a mound of dirt sitting on top of her, spilling over the bed and onto the floor. They'd gotten her good, all right.

He eased into the room, stepping softly, coming alongside the bed. She looked even older up close, almost like a skeleton. It hardly seemed there was a body under the blankets, under the dirt. She opened her eyes and saw him. He was looking at the dirt and didn't know she was watching until she whispered, "Which one are you?"

He jumped, turning to look ...

"I didn't bring you here," she said.

"No," he said. He looked at her, afraid to say much else, looking at how her faded gray skin pulled across chin and cheeks—the facial bones looked nearly sharp enough to break through.

At last he said, "They put dirt on you."

She looked down, wincing. It was as though she were seeing the dark mound for the first time. Her head trembled and fell back again, barely pressing a dent in the pillow. "From the basement," she

said. "They've made a mess of my basement, you know?" She breathed deep, or tried to. Her face buckled, showing an empty mouth, dark gums. "They spite me," she said. "All I want is to love them, and they spite me."

"Are you their aunt, or something?"

"No. I just brought them here. All I wanted ... all that I ... all that ... What's your name?"

"Sean."

"That's a nice name ... nice ... nice ... I bought them things, you know? I would buy them things and go driving. I'd bring things home and wrap them up nice ... and I'd go driving ... and sometimes I'd see a boy or a girl playing alone, and I'd go talk to them. I know all about being alone, you know? All about it. I'd tell them I had presents and they'd come ... to the car. And we'd unwrap things and sing and drive away Nobody ever suspects an old woman. I'd walk away with them ... I'd drive away with them ... and nobody ever suspected that ... that Did you tell me your name?"

"Sean."

"Yes. That's right. I didn't bring you here, did I?"

"I came through the window."

"I should buy you something too, Sean. When I get better we'll drive down to Kiddy Mart and get you ... get you ... whatever ... anything you want. We'll wrap it too, so you can open it ... like Christmas or a birthday When I'm better. When the headaches stop. Oh my, but I do get the headaches. Like battering rams ..."

"You don't have to buy me things."

There was a crazy look on her face—a spastic, thin-lipped scowl. "I be so nice to them and they get like this. They say they don't want to stay and I have to ... make them ... and they get like this. You should see the basement. Oh my ... I try so hard and they get like this ..."

"Want me to push off some of this dirt?"

"Dirt?"

"They put dirt on your bed. Remember?"

She looked up again. "Oh, dear me. I thought that was yesterday ... or Isn't it something how it's all gotten outside my head like this. Push it off for me. Oh yes."

He leaned over and started shoving heaped clay onto the floor. It thumped on the wooden boards.

"You're different, aren't you?" she said. "I won't have to make you stay."

"Stay?"

"With me. Like a family."

"Never go home?" he asked.

"This can be your home."

There was an awful look on her face. Buckeye



didn't like it. "I could come visit," he said. "It's just that right now I've got to leave and—"

"No!" Her head rose off the pillow. Her yellow eyes turned ugly—like Ol' Yeller's eyes right before they shot him.

And suddenly he remembered the key and the three friends waiting outside.

"I gotta go."

He turned and ran toward the stairs, stopping once to see if she was following. She wasn't. Her head had fallen back again. Her eyes were shut. But he was scared now. The woman was nuts.

He ran down the stairs, looking for the other kids, looking for the girl who'd promised to find the key. But they weren't in the hall. They weren't in the kitchen, either.

"Hey!" he shouted.

No answer. Only his own echo in the lonely house.

There was a door open by the stove—a door with steps leading down. They'd gone to the basement. He leaned inside the door and fumbled for a light. There was no switch on the wall. He looked around. Above his head a dirty string dangled from a bare bulb. He pulled. The light came on. And below him, at the bottom of the stairs, was another string—another bare bulb.

He moved down. "Hey, you guys. You down here? What're you doing in the dark any—?" He pulled the second string. The second light came on, and at first he thought the basement was empty.

Then he saw them. All in rows. Ten neat little mounds rising out of the basement floor.

And on one of them was the key.

He walked toward it, head spinning. *You should see the basement ... I try so hard and they get like this ...*

He fell, dropping to grass-stained knees. What kind of crazy woman would ...?

His hands shot toward the key, sinking past it, clawing at the soft mound of dirt. *They say they*

don't want to stay and I have to make them ...

And then he saw.

And then he was up, running, stumbling, falling up the stairs, through the hall. There were no pictures on the wall. No kids in the kitchen.

He tripped and skidded into the dark living room. The moon was up, glowing thinly through the trees, through the window.

The window looked like the other side of the world.

He pulled himself up and ran. Scared. Thinking of the woman. Thinking of her coming down the stairs. Thinking of her grabbing him as he squeezed through the window, holding him with cold dead fingers, pulling him, dragging him to the basement. *Oh, God, please, this is Buckeye talking. Get me out of here and I'll be Pope ... anything you want ... just get me out of here!*

He was halfway through, struggling, pulling, praying a blue streak he wouldn't get stuck. And then he was falling, tumbling. The ground raced up. He hit and rolled, losing his wind, but scrambling up anyway—scrambling to his feet and running down the hill.

The creek was cold. He splashed through the deep part, forgetting the stones.

They hadn't waited. None of them. Not even Max—big-talking Max who wasn't afraid of anything. They'd all gone home. Or maybe they'd been back there hiding, waiting for him to come through the window so they could jump out at him. Maybe they were still back there, wondering what had happened ...

It didn't matter. Nothing mattered. There was only running. There was only getting away from the house.

He ran past Lanny's tree fort and then down the hill to the highway and then across the field to home. His stomach hurt. His chest hurt. His clothes were wet from the creek and there were splinters in his hands from falling in the house.

But he didn't stop. He kept seeing the little face in the shallow grave. The little eyes that hadn't closed. The little nose. The dark hair. She wasn't so pretty after lying in the dirt all that time.

And then he was on his street. He was turning the bend, climbing the walk. Home. The door. He fell against the screen, forgetting the key, pounding, kicking ...

The television was on inside. Laughter. A family show. Happy people. Happy endings.

His mother moved toward the door. "You've done it this time, Sean. It's after nine. Don't you know there's crazy people out ...?"

But he didn't hear. There was only the little girl looking at him from the dirt halo. There was only the sound of his own screams. **17**



The Broken Hoop

by Pamela Sargent

TORN BETWEEN TWO CULTURES, SHE ALSO HAD
TO CHOOSE BETWEEN TWO WORLDS—
AND ONLY ONE OF THEM WAS REAL.

There are other worlds. Perhaps there is one in which my people rule the forests of the northeast, and there may even be one in which white men and red men walk together as friends.

I am too old now to make my way to the hill. When I was younger and stronger, I would walk there often and strain my ears trying to hear the sounds of warriors on the plains or the stomping of buffalo herds. But last night, as I slept, I saw Little Deer, a cloak of buffalo hide over his shoulders, his hair white; he did not speak. It was then that I knew his spirit had left his body.

Once, I believed that it was God's will that we remain in our own worlds in order to atone for the consequences of our actions. Now I know that He can show some of us His mercy.

I am a Mohawk, but I never knew my parents. Perhaps I would have died if the Lemaitres had not taken me into their home.

I learned most of what I knew about my people from two women. One was Sister Jeanne at school, who taught me shame. From her I learned

that my tribe had been murderers, pagans, eaters of human flesh. One of the tales she told was of Father Isaac Jogues, tortured to death by my people when he tried to tell them of Christ's teachings. The other woman was an old servant in the Lemaitres' kitchen; Nawisga told me legends of a proud people who ruled the forests and called me little Manaho, after a princess who died for her lover. From her I learned something quite different.

Even as a child, I had visions. As I gazed out my window, the houses of Montreal would vanish, melting into the trees; a glowing hoop would beckon. I might have stepped through it then, but already I had learned to doubt. Such visions were delusions; to accept them meant losing reality. Maman and Père Lemaitre had shown me that. Soon, I no longer saw the woodlands, and felt no loss. I was content to become what the Lemaitres wanted me to be.

When I was eighteen, Père Lemaitre died. Maman Lemaitre had always been gentle; when her brother Henri arrived to manage her affairs, I saw that her gentleness was only passivity. There would no longer be a place for me; Henri had made that clear. She did not fight him.

The Broken Hoop

I could stay in that house no longer. Late one night, I left, taking a few coins and small pieces of jewelry Père Lemaitre had given me, and shed my last tears for the Lemaitres and the life I had known during that journey.

I stayed in a small rooming house in Buffalo throughout the winter of 1889, trying to decide what to do. As the snow swirled outside, I heard voices in the wind, and imagined that they were calling to me. But I clung to my sanity; illusions could not help me.

In the early spring, a man named Gus Yeager came to the boarding house and took a room down the hall. He was in his forties and had a thick, gray-streaked beard. I suspected that he had things to hide; he was a yarn-spinner who could talk for hours and yet say little. He took a liking to me and finally confided that he was going west to sell patent medicines. He needed a partner. I was almost out of money by then and welcomed the chance he offered me.

I became Manaho, the Indian princess, whose arcane arts had supposedly created the medicine, a harmless mixture of alcohol and herbs. I wore a costume Gus had purchased from an old Seneca, and stood on the back of our wagon while Gus sold his bottles: "Look at Princess Manaho here, and what this miracle medicine has done for her—almost forty, but she drinks a bottle every day and looks like a girl, never been sick a day in her life." There were enough foolish people who believed him for us to make a little money.

We stopped in small towns, dusty places that had narrow roads covered with horse manure and wooden buildings that creaked as the wind whistled by. I remember only browns and grays in those towns; we had left the green trees and red brick of Pennsylvania and northern Ohio behind us. Occasionally we stopped at a farm; I remember men with hatchet faces, women with stooped shoulders and hands as gnarled and twisted as the leafless limbs of trees, children with eyes as empty and gray as the sky.

Sometimes, as we rode in our wagon, Gus would take out a bottle of Princess Manaho's Miracle Medicine and begin to sing songs between swallows. He would get drunk quickly. He was happy only then; often, he was silent and morose. We slept in old rooming houses infested with insects, in barns, often under trees. Some towns would welcome us as a diversion; we would leave others hastily, knowing we were targets of suspicion.

Occasionally, as we went farther west, I would see other Indians. I had little to do with them, but would watch them from a distance, noting their shabby clothes and weather-worn faces. I had little

in common with such people; I could read and speak both French and English. I could have been a lady. At times, the townsfolk would look from one of them to me, as if making a comparison of some sort, and I would feel uncomfortable, almost affronted.

We came to a town in Dakota. But instead of moving on, we stayed for several days. Gus began to change, and spent more time in saloons.

One night, he came to my room and pounded on the door. I let him in quickly, afraid he would wake everyone else in the boarding house. He closed the door, then threw himself at me, pushing me against the wall as he fumbled at my nightdress. I was repelled by the smell of sweat and whiskey, his harsh beard and warm breath. I struggled with him as quietly as I could, and at last pushed him away. Weakened by drink and the struggle, he collapsed across my bed; soon he was snoring. I sat with him all night, afraid to move.

Gus said nothing next morning as we prepared to leave. We rode for most of the day while he drank; this time, he did not sing. That afternoon, he threw me off the wagon. By the time I was able to get to my feet, Gus was riding off; dust billowed from the wheels. I ran after him, screaming; he did not stop.

I was alone on the plain. I had no money, no food and water. I could walk back to the town, but what would become of me there? My mind was slipping; as the sky darkened, I thought I saw a ring glow near me.

The wind died; the world became silent. In the distance, someone was walking along the road toward me. As the figure drew nearer, I saw that it was a woman. Her face was coppery, and her hair black; she wore a long yellow robe and a necklace of small blue feathers.

Approaching, she took my hand, but did not speak. Somehow I sensed that I was safe with her. We walked together for a while; the moon rose and lighted our way. "What shall I do?" I said at last. "Where is the nearest town? Can you help me?"

She did not answer, but instead held my arm more tightly; her eyes pleaded with me. I said, "I have no money, no place to go." She shook her head slowly, then released me and stepped back.

The sudden light almost blinded me. The sun was high overhead, but the woman's face was shadowed. She held out her hand, beckoning to me. A ring shone around her, and then she was gone.

I turned, trembling with fear. I was standing outside another drab, clapboard town; my clothes were covered with dust. I had imagined it all as I walked through the night; somehow my mind had conjured up a comforting vision. I had dreamed as

The sun was high
overhead, but the woman's
face was shadowed.
She held out her hand,
beckoning to me.
A ring shone around her,
and then she was gone.

I walked; that was the only possible explanation. I refused to believe that I was mad. In that way, I denied the woman.

I walked into the town and saw a man riding toward the stable in a wagon. He was dressed in a long black robe—a priest. I ran to him; he stopped and waited for me to speak.

"Father," I cried out. "Let me speak to you."

His kind brown eyes gazed down at me. He was a short, stocky man whose face had been darkened by the sun and lined by prairie winds. "What is it, my child?" He peered at me more closely. "Are you from the reservation here?"

"No. My name is Catherine Lemaitre, I come from the east. My companion abandoned me, and I have no money."

"I cannot help you, then. I have little money to give you."

"I do not ask for charity." I had sold enough worthless medicine with Gus to know what to say to this priest. I kept my hands on his seat so that he could not move without pushing me away. "I was sent to school, I can read and write and do figures. I want work, a place to stay. I am a Catholic, Father." I reached into my pocket and removed the rosary I had kept, but rarely used. "Surely there is something I can do."

He was silent for a few moments. "Get in, child," he said at last. I climbed up next to him.

His name was Father Morel and he had been sent by his superiors to help the Indians living in the area, most of whom were Sioux. He had a mission near the reservation and often traveled to the homes of the Indians to tell them about Christ. He had been promised an assistant who had never arrived. He could offer me little, but he needed a teacher, someone who could teach children to read and write.

I had arrived at Father Morel's mission in the autumn. My duties, besides teaching, were cooking meals and keeping the small wooden house next to the chapel clean. Father Morel taught catechism, but I was responsible for the other subjects. Winter arrived, a harsh, cold winter with winds that bit at my face. As the drifts grew higher, fewer of the Sioux

children came to school. The ones who did sat silently on the benches, huddling in their heavy coverings, while I built a fire in the wood-burner.

The children irritated me with their passivity, their lack of interest. They sat, uncomplaining, while I wrote words or figures on my slate board or read to them from one of Father Morel's books. A little girl named White Cow Sees, baptized Joan, was the only one who showed interest. She would ask to hear stories about the saints, and the other children, mostly boys, would nod mutely in agreement.

I was never sure how much any of them understood. Few of them spoke much English, although White Cow Sees and a little boy named Whirlwind Chaser, baptized Joseph, managed to become fairly fluent in it. Whirlwind Chaser was particularly fond of hearing about Saint Sebastian. At last I discovered that he saw Saint Sebastian as a great warrior, shot with arrows by an enemy tribe; he insisted on thinking that Sebastian had returned from the other world to avenge himself.

I lost most of them in the spring to the warmer days. White Cow Sees still came, and a few of the boys, but the rest had vanished. There was little food that spring and the Indians seemed to be waiting for something.

I went into town as often as possible to get supplies, and avoided the Indians on the reservation. They were silent people, never showing emotion; they seemed both hostile and indifferent. I was irritated by their mixture of pride and despair, saw them as unkempt and dirty, and did not understand why they refused to do anything that might better their lot.

I began to view the children in the same way. There was always an unpleasant odor about them, and their quiet refusal to learn was more irritating to me than pranks and childish foolishness would have been. I became less patient with them, subjecting them to spelling drills, to long columns of addition, to lectures on their ignorance. When they looked away from me in humiliation, I refused to see.

I met Little Deer at the beginning of summer. He had come to see Father Morel, arriving while the children and I were at Mass. He looked at me with suspicion as we left the chapel.

I let the children go early that day, watching as they walked toward their homes. White Cow Sees trailed behind the boys, trying to get their attention.

"You." I turned and saw the Indian who had come to see Father Morel. He was a tall man, somewhat paler than the Sioux I had seen. He wore a necklace of deer bones around his neck; his hair was in long, dark braids. His nose, instead of being large and prominent, was small and straight. "You

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are the teacher."

"Yes, I am Catherine Lemaitre." I said it coldly.

"Some call me John Wells, some call me Little Deer. My mother's cousin has come here, a boy named Whirlwind Chaser."

"He stays away now. I have not seen him since winter."

"What can you teach him?"

"More than you can."

"You teach him Wasichu foolishness," he said. "I have heard of y u and have seen you in the town talking to white men. You think you will make them forget who you are, but you are wrong."

"You have no right to speak to me that way." I began to walk away, but he followed me.

"My father was a Wasichu, a trader," Little Deer went on. "My mother is a Minneconjou. I lived with the Wasichu, I learned their speech and I can write my name and read some words. My mother returned here to her people when I was small. You wear the clothes of a Wasichu woman and stay with the Black Robe, but he tells me you are not his woman."

"Priests have no women. And you should tell Whirlwind Chaser to return to school. White men rule here now. Learning their ways is all that can help you."

"I have seen their ways. The Wasichus are mad. They hate the earth. A man cannot live that way."

I said, "They are stronger than you."

"You are only a foolish woman and know nothing. You teach our children to forget their fathers. You think you are a Wasichu, but to them you are only a silly woman they have deceived."

"Why do you come here and speak to Father Morel?"

"He is foolish, but a good man. I tell him of troubles, of those who wish to see him. It is too bad he is not a braver man. He would beat your madness out of you."

I strode away from Little Deer, refusing to look back, sure that I would see only scorn on his face. But when I glanced out my window, I saw that he was smiling as he rode away.

The children stayed away from school in the autumn. There were more soldiers in town and around the reservation and I discovered that few Indians had been seen at trading posts. I refused to worry. A young corporal I had met in town had visited me a few times, telling me of his home in Minnesota. Soon, I prayed, he would speak to me, and I could leave with him and forget the reservation.

Then Little Deer returned. I was sweeping

dust from the porch, and directed him to the small room where Father Morel was reading. He shook his head. "It is you I wish to see."

"About what? Are you people planning another uprising? You will die for it—there are many soldiers here."

"The Christ has returned to us."

I clutched my broom. "You are mad."

"Two of our men have seen him. They traveled west to where the Fish Eaters—the Paiutes—live. The Christ appeared to them there. He is named Wovoka and he is not a white man as I have thought. He was killed by the Wasichus on the cross long ago, but now he has returned to save us."

"That is blasphemy."

"I hear it is true. He will give us back our land, he will raise all our dead and return our land to us. The Wasichus will be swept away."

"No!" I shouted.

Little Deer was looking past me, as if seeing something else beyond. "I have heard," he went on, "that Wovoka bears the scars of crucifixion. He has told us we must dance so that we are not forgotten when the resurrection takes place and the Wasichus disappear."

"If you believe that, Little Deer, you will believe anything."

"Listen to me!" Frightened, I stepped back.

"A man named Eagle Wing Stretches told me he saw his dead father when he danced. I was dancing with him and in my mind I saw the sacred tree flower, I saw the hoop joined once again. I understood again nature's circle in which we are the earth's children, and are nourished by her until as old men we become like children again and return to the earth. Yet I knew that all I saw was in my thoughts, that my mind spoke to me, but I did not truly see. I danced until my feet were light, but I could not see. Eagle Wing Stretches was at my side and he gave a great cry and then fell to the ground as if dead. Later, he told me he had seen his father in the other world, and that his father had said they would soon be together."

"But you saw nothing yourself."

"But I have. I saw the other world when I was a boy."

I leaned against my broom, looking away from his wild eyes.

"I saw it long ago, in the Moon of Falling Leaves. My friends were talking of the Wasichus and how we would drive them off when we were men. I grew sad and climbed up a mountain near our camp to be alone. In my heart, I believed that we would never drive off the Wasichus, for they were many and I knew their madness well—I learned it from my father and his friends. It was that mountain there I climbed."



He pointed and I saw a small mountain on the horizon. "I was alone," Little Deer continued. "Then I heard the sound of buffalo hooves and I looked down the mountain, but I saw no buffalo there. Above me, a great circle glowed, brighter than the yellow metal called gold."

"No," I said softly.

He looked at me and read my face. "You have seen it, too."

"No," I said after a few moments.

"You have. I see that you have. You can step through the circle, and yet you deny it. I looked through the circle, and saw the buffalo, and warriors riding at their side. I wanted to step through and join them, but fear held me back. Then the vision vanished." He leaned forward and clutched my shoulders. "I will tell you what I think. There is another world near ours, where there are no Wasichus and my people are free. On that mountain, there is a pathway that leads to it. I will dance there, and I will find it again. I told my story to a medicine man named High Shirt and he says that we must dance on the mountain—he believes that I saw Wovoka's vision."

"You will find nothing." But I remembered the circle, and the robed woman, and the woods that had replaced Montreal. I wanted to believe Little Deer.

"Come with me, Catherine. I have been sick since I first saw you—my mind cannot leave you even when I dance. Your heart is bitter and you bear the seeds of the Wasichu madness and I know that I should choose another, but it is you I want."

I shrank from him, seeing myself in dirty hides inside a tepee as we pretended that our delusions were real. I would not tie my life to that of an ignorant half-breed. But before I could speak, he had left the porch, muttering, "I will wait," and was on his horse.

On a cold night in December, I stared at Little Deer's mountain from my window.

I was alone. Father Morel was with the Indians, trying again to tell them that their visions were false. The ghost dancing had spread and the soldiers would act soon.

Horses whinnied outside. Buttoning my dress, I hurried downstairs, wondering who could be visiting at this late hour. The door swung open; three dark shapes stood on the porch. I opened my mouth to scream and then saw that one of the men was Little Deer.

"Catherine, will you come with me now?" I managed to shake my head. "Then I must take you. I have little time." Before I could move, he grabbed me; one of his companions bound my arms quickly and threw a buffalo robe over my shoulders. As I struggled, Little Deer dragged me outside.

He got on his horse behind me and we rode through the night. Snowflakes melted on my face. "You will be sorry for this," I said. "Someone will come after me."

"It will soon be snowing and there will be no tracks. And no one will follow an Indian woman who decided to run off and join her people."

"You are not my people." I pulled at my bonds. "Do you think this will make me care for you? I will only hate you more."

"You will see the other world, and travel to it. There is little time left—I feel it."

We rode on until we came to a small group of houses which were little more than tree branches slung together. We stopped and Little Deer murmured a few words to his companions before getting off his horse.

"High Shirt is here," he said. "A little girl is sick. We will wait for him." He helped me off the horse and I swung at him with my bound arms,

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striking him in the chest. He pulled out his knife and I thought he would kill me; instead, he cut the ropes, freeing my hands.

"You do not understand," he said. "I wish only to have you with me when we pass into the next world. I thought if I came for you, you would understand. Sometimes one must show a woman these things or she will think you are only filled with words." He sighed. "There is my horse. I will not force you to stay if your heart holds only hate for me."

I was about to leave. But before I could act, a cry came from the house nearest to us. Little Deer went to the entrance and I followed him. An old man came out and said, "The child is dead."

I looked inside the hovel. A fire was burning on the dirt floor and I saw a man and woman huddled over a small body. The light flickered over the child's face. It was White Cow Sees.

The best one was gone, the cleverest. She might have found her way out of this place. I wept bitterly. I do not know how long I stood there, weeping, before Little Deer led me away.

A few days after the death of White Cow Sees, we learned that the great chief Sitting Bull had been shot by soldiers. Little Deer had placed me in the keeping of one of his companions, Rattling Hawk. He lived with his wife, Red Eagle Woman, in a hovel not far from Little Deer's mountain. I spent most of my days helping their three children search for firewood; I was still mourning White Cow Sees and felt unable to act. Often Rattling Hawk and Red Eagle Woman would dance with others and I would watch them whirl through the snow.

After the death of Sitting Bull, I was afraid that there would be an uprising. Instead, the Indians only danced more, as if Wovoka's promise would be fulfilled. Little Deer withdrew to a sweat lodge with Rattling Hawk, and I did not see him for three days.

During this time, I began to see colored lights shine from the mountain, each light a spear thrown at heaven; the air around me would feel electric. But when daylight came, the lights would disappear. I had heard of magnetism while with the Lemaitres. Little Deer had only mistaken natural forces for a sign; now he sat with men in an enclosure, pouring water over hot stones. I promised myself that I would tell him I wanted to go back to the mission.

But when Little Deer and High Shirt emerged from the lodge, they walked past me without a word and headed for the mountain. Little Deer was in a trance, his face gaunt from the days without food and his eyes already filled with visions. I went back to Rattling Hawk's home to wait. I had to leave soon; I had seen soldiers from a distance the day

before, and did not want to die with these people.

Little Deer came to me that afternoon. Before I could speak, he motioned for silence. His eyes stared past me and I shivered in my blanket, waiting.

"High Shirt said that the spirits would be with us today. We climbed up and waited by the place where I saw the other world. High Shirt sang a song of the sacred tree and then the tree was before us and we both saw it."

"You thought you saw it," I said. "One would see anything after days without food in a sweat lodge."

He held up his hand, palm toward me. "We saw it inside the yellow circle. The circle grew larger and we saw four maidens near it dressed in fine dresses with eagle feathers on their brows, and with them four horses, one black, one chestnut, one white, and one gray, and on the horses four warriors painted with yellow streaks like lightning. Their tepees were around them in a circle and we saw their people, fat with good living and smiling as the maidens danced. Their chief came forward and I saw a yellow circle painted on his forehead. He lifted his arms, and then he spoke: Bring your people here, for I see you are lean and have sad faces. Bring them here, for I see your people traveling a black road of misery. Bring them here, and they will dance with us, but it must be soon, for our medicine men say the circle will soon be gone. He spoke with our speech. Then the circle vanished, and High Shirt leaped up and we saw that the snow where the circle had been was melted. He ran to tell our people. I came to you."

"So you will go and dance," I said, "and wait for the world which will never come. I have seen—" He took my arm, but I would say no more. He released me.

"It was a true vision," he said quietly. "It was not Wovoka's vision, but it was a true one. The Black Robe told me that God is merciful, but I thought He was merciful only to Wasichus. Now I think that he has given us a road to a good world and has smiled upon us at last."

"I am leaving, Little Deer. I will not freeze on that mountain with you or wait for the soldiers to kill me."

"No, Catherine—you will come. You will see this world with me." He led me to Rattling Hawk's home.

He climbed up that evening. Rattling Hawk and his family came, and High Shirt brought fifteen people. The rest had chosen to stay behind. "Your own people do not believe you," I said scornfully to Little Deer as we climbed. "See how few there are. The others will dance down there and

I huddled closer to the fire.
Little Deer pounded
the ground, his arms cutting
the air like scythes.
He spun around and became
an eagle, soaring over me,
ready to seize me with
his talons. The stars
began to flash, disappearing
and then reappearing.
The dancers seemed to flicker.

wait for Wovoka to sweep away the white men. They are too lazy to climb up here."

He glanced at me; there was pain in his eyes. I regreted my harsh words. It came to me that out of all the men I had known, only Little Deer had looked into my mind and seen me as I was. At that moment, I knew that I could have been happy with him in a different world.

We climbed until High Shirt told us to stop. Two of the women built a fire and I sat near it as the others danced around us.

"Dance with us, Catherine," said Little Deer. I shook my head and he danced near me, feet pounding the ground, arms churning at his sides. I wondered how long they would dance, waiting for the vision. Little Deer seemed transformed; he was a chief, leading his people. My foot tapped as he danced. He had seen me as I was, but I had not truly seen him; I had looked at him with the eyes of the white woman, and my mind had clothed him in white words—"half-breed," "illiterate," "insane," "savage."

I fed some wood to the fire, then looked up at the sky. The forces of magnetism were at work again. A rainbow of lights flickered, while the stars shone on steadily in their places.

Suddenly the stars shifted.

I cried out. The stars moved again. New constellations appeared, a cluster of stars above me, a long loop on the horizon. Little Deer danced to me and I heard the voice of High Shirt chanting nearby.

I huddled closer to the fire. Little Deer pounded the ground, his arms cutting the air like scythes. He spun around and became an eagle, soaring over me, ready to seize me with his talons. The stars began to flash, disappearing and then reappearing. One of the women gave a cry. The dancers seemed to flicker.

I leaped up, terrified. Little Deer swirled

around me, spinning faster and faster. Then he disappeared.

I spun around. He was on the other side of the fire, still dancing; then he was at my side again. I tried to run toward him; he was behind me. A group of dancers circled me, winking on and off.

"Catherine!" Little Deer's voice surrounded me, thundering through the night. His voice blended with the chants of High Shirt until my ears throbbed with pain.

I fled from the circle of dancers and fell across a snow-covered rock. "Catherine!" the voice cried again. The dark shapes dancing around the fire grew dimmer. A wind swept past me, and the dancers vanished.

I stood up quickly. And then I saw the vision.

A golden circle glowed in front of me; I saw green grass and a circle of tepees. Children danced around a fire. Then I saw High Shirt and the others, dancing slowly with another group of Indians, weaving a pattern around a small tree. The circle grew larger; Little Deer stood inside it, holding his arms out to me.

I had only to step through the circle to be with him. My feet carried me forward; I held out my hand and whispered his name.

Then I hesitated. My mind chattered to me—I was sharing a delusion. The dancers would dance until they dropped, and then would freeze on the mountain, too exhausted to climb down. Their desperation had made them mad. If I stepped inside the circle, I would be lost to the irrationality that had always been dormant inside me. I had to save myself.

The circle wavered and dimmed. I saw the other world as if through water, and the circle vanished. I cried out in triumph; my reason had won. But as I looked around at the melted snow, I saw that I was alone.

I waited on the mountain until it grew too cold for me there, then climbed down to Rattling Hawk's empty home before going back up the mountain next day. I do not know for how many days I did this. At last I realized that the yellow circle I had seen would not reappear. In my sorrow, I felt that part of me had vanished with the circle, and imagined that my soul had joined Little Deer. I never saw the glowing hoop again.

I rode back to the mission a few days after Christmas through a blizzard, uncaring about whether I lived or died. There, Father Morel told me that the soldiers had acted at last, killing a band of dancing Indians near Wounded Knee, and I knew that the dancing and any hope these people had were over.

I was back in the white man's world, a prisoner of the world to come. 17



Some Days Are Like That

by Bruce J. Balfour

BEING THE LAST MAN ON EARTH WASN'T ALL FUN AND GAMES!

The city glowed with a soft golden light in the sunset. As daylight receded and the silent streets and buildings began to cool, automatic lights flicked on to push back the darkness.

No one moved in the streets. Newspapers fluttered along the pavement like capering ghosts, stopping here and there to mingle with others, then moving on. The city was dead. Its buildings were empty. Only mindless lights and the hum of power lines remained.

The tallest building in the city rose to several hundred stories. Atop the building stood a man. He was a tall man, of slim build, whose dark eyes gazed down upon the city with infinite sadness. A pair of high-powered binoculars hung limply from his right hand.

His name was Benjamin Roth. He was a systems analyst who had just returned from a two-week vacation in the desert. At first he had been pleased about the extraordinary lack of traffic on his return trip, but it quickly became obvious when he reentered the city that something was wrong. There was no life of any kind.

He had searched. First by car, then in a small airplane. It was as if everyone had vanished in the midst of their daily activities. Water was left running, houses and stores were left open, cars were stopped in the middle of the street. After three days he had left the city and flown to others, only to find that the same thing had happened there.

His search took more than a year, during which time he visited most of the world. Supplies

had been no problem. He'd found food everywhere. In despair he returned to his home, vainly attempting to figure out what had happened. But there was no clue. He didn't want to admit it, but it was clear that he was the last man on earth. Roth chuckled softly. It was like an old movie, but where were the cameras?

After a day of confused wandering through the city streets, he found himself on top of the building holding a pair of binoculars. Having forgotten his fear of heights, he tossed the binoculars over the railing and watched them fall until they vanished from his view in the creeping darkness.

He listened. There were no sounds. No cars or human noises. Only his heart beating. He sat back, reached for a cigarette, then thought better of it. The light was fading fast. Time was running out and there was something to be done. He placed his hands on the railing, sighed, and came to a decision. He couldn't live in a world without people. It was time to go. He jumped.

It was an interesting feeling, on the way down. The lit windows in the building shot past with increasing speed, and he was buffeted by the wind. He was completely alert and strangely calm. His senses were operating at full capacity in the final moments of his life. In fact, his hearing was sharp enough to hear a telephone ringing through an open tenth-floor window ...

Well, he thought, some days are like that.

The friendly pavement rushed up to meet him and darkness closed in. **17**

TV's Twilight Zone: Part Fifteen

CONTINUING MARC SCOTT ZICREE'S
SHOW-BY-SHOW GUIDE TO THE ENTIRE
TWILIGHT ZONE TELEVISION SERIES,
COMPLETE WITH ROD SERLING'S OPENING
AND CLOSING NARRATIONS

"You unlock this door with the key of imagination. Beyond it is another dimension—a dimension of sound, a dimension of sight, a dimension of mind. You're moving into a land of both shadow and substance, of things and ideas. You've just crossed over into the Twilight Zone."



115. THE NEW EXHIBIT

Written by Jerry Sohl
Plotted by Charles Beaumont and Jerry Sohl
Producer: Bert Granet
Director: John Brahm
Dir. of Photography: George T. Clemens
Music: Stock

Cast

Martin L. Senescu: Martin Balsam
Mr. Ferguson: Will Kuluva
Emma Senescu: Maggie Mahoney
Dave: William Mims
Henri Desire Landru: Milton Parsons
Jack the Ripper: David Bond
Albert W. Hicks: Bob Mitchell
Burke: Robert L. McCord
With Billy Beck, Phil Chambers,
Lennie Breman, Marcel Hillaire, Ed
Barth, and Craig Curtis

"Martin Lombard Senescu, a gentle man, the dedicated curator of Murderers' Row in Ferguson's Wax Museum. He ponders the reasons why ordinary men are driven to commit mass murder. What Mr. Senescu does not know is that the groundwork has already been laid for his own special kind of madness and torment—found only in the Twilight Zone."

Mr. Ferguson tells Martin that, as the result of poor attendance, he has been forced to sell the wax museum. Martin has been his employee for thirty years, and five of the figures have come to have special meaning for him: Jack the Ripper, Burke and Hare, Albert W. Hicks, and Henri Desire Landru—all notorious murderers. Martin pleads to be allowed to house the figures in his basement; perhaps he will be able to get backers and open his own wax museum. Reluctantly, Ferguson agrees—to the dismay of Martin's wife, Emma. As the weeks pass Martin's obsession with the figures continues to grow; he spends all his time grooming and attending to them. Desperate, Emma asks her brother Dave for advice. He suggests sabotage: disconnect the air conditioner and soon the wax figures won't be a problem. Late that night, Emma sneaks down to the basement to pull the plug. But suddenly, Jack the Ripper comes to life and murders her. Realizing that the police would never believe that a wax dummy killed his wife, Martin buries Emma in the basement and covers the grave with cement. But Dave doesn't swallow Martin's story that Emma's gone to visit his sister, particularly when he hears the air conditioner going full blast downstairs! Dave sneaks into the basement, and is

promptly dispatched by an ax wielded by Albert W. Hicks. Sometime later, Mr. Ferguson arrives with the news that he intends to sell the five figures. Although Martin protests, Ferguson remains adamant. When Martin goes upstairs to prepare some tea, Landru strangles Ferguson with a garrote. Returning, Martin is appalled to find Ferguson dead. Enraged, he tells the figures that he's going to destroy them. They come alive and draw near him, speaking to Martin in his mind, telling him that it is *he*, not they, who committed the murders. Later, at the Marchand Museum in Brussels, a guide leads a group of the curious through Murderers' Row, luridly relating the terrible deeds of each of the figures. Finally, he comes to the row's newest addition, a man who murdered his wife, brother-in-law, and employer. It is the figure of Martin Lombard Senescu!

"The new exhibit became very popular at Marchand's, but of all the figures, none was ever regarded with more dread than that of Martin Lombard Senescu. It was something about the eyes, people said. It's the look that one often gets after taking a quick walk through the Twilight Zone."

116. OF LATE I THINK OF CLIFFORDVILLE

Written by Rod Serling

Based on the short story "Blind Alley" by Malcolm Jameson

Producer: Bert Granet

Director: David Lowell Rich

Dir. of Photography: Robert W. Pittack

Music: Stock

Cast

Bill Feathersmith: Albert Salmi

Miss Devlin: Julie Newmar

Diedrich: John Anderson

Hecate: Wright King

Gibbons: Guy Raymond

Joanna: Christine Burke

Clark: John Harmon

Cronk: Hugh Sanders

"Witness a murder. The killer is Mr. William Feathersmith, a robber baron whose body composition is made up of a refrigeration plant covered by thick skin. In a moment, Mr. Feathersmith will proceed on his daily course of conquest and calumny with yet another business dealing. But this one will be one of those bizarre transactions that take place in an odd marketplace known as the Twilight Zone."

The killing is a financial one: Mr. Diedrich, who has known and disliked Feathersmith since they were both young men in Cliffordville, Indiana, has taken out a \$3 million loan to aid his tool and die company. Feathersmith has bought up the loan, and calls the note due—Diedrich is forced to sell him the company in order to avoid bankruptcy. Late that night, Feathersmith is drinking alone in his office when Mr. Hecate, a custodian for forty years who is also from Cliffordville, enters the room. Feathersmith tells him that, having



reached the top, he's now bored. He'd like to be able to go back to the Cliffordville of his past and start all over again, re-experience the thrill of acquisition. A few minutes later, Feathersmith is surprised when the elevator deposits him not on the lobby, but on the floor of the Devlin Travel Agency. Miss Devlin, an attractive young lady with two horns sprouting from her head, offers him a unique service—she'll return him to the Cliffordville of 1910. He'll look young and his memory of the present will be unimpaired. The price is *not* his soul—they already *have* that—but his enormous fortune, all but \$1400. Feathersmith agrees, and shortly finds himself in Cliffordville. He expects nothing but success, but he is done in by his own faulty memory. He courts the daughter of Gibbons, the banker, and finds that she is not lovely—as he had remembered—but unspeakably homely. He uses his entire \$1400 to buy oil-rich land from Gibbons and Diedrich, not realizing that it is inaccessible to the drills of 1910. Finally, he tries to convince machinists to build a variety of modern-day inventions, but is unable to recall their workings specifically enough to draw blueprints. All this serves only to utterly exhaust him. With a shock, he realizes he's been tricked: He *looks* thirty, but

internally he's still seventy-five! Miss Devlin appears. Feathersmith begs her to return him to 1963. She tells him that a special train is leaving immediately for the present and that Feathersmith is welcome to board—for forty dollars. Just then, Mr. Hecate happens by; Feathersmith sells him the deed to the oil-rich land for forty dollars. Then he returns to the present, but it is a present substantially altered by Feathersmith's dealings in the past. Feathersmith is now the janitor of forty years—and Hecate the wealthy financier!

"Mr. William J. Feathersmith, tycoon, who tried the track one more time and found it muddier than he remembered—proving with at least a degree of conclusiveness that nice guys don't always finish last, and some people should quit when they're ahead. Tonight's tale of iron men and irony, delivered F.O.B. from the Twilight Zone."

117. THE INCREDIBLE WORLD OF HORACE FORD

Written by Reginald Rose
 Producer: Herbert Hirschman
 Director: Abner Biberman
 Dir. of Photography: George T. Clemens
 Music: Stock

Cast

Horace Ford: Pat Hingle
 Laura Ford: Nan Martin
 Mrs. Ford: Ruth White
 Leonard O'Brien: Phillip Pine
 Betty O'Brien: Mary Carver
 Mr. Judson: Vaughn Taylor
 Horace (child): Jim E. Titus
 Hermie Brandt: Jerry Davis

"Mr. Horace Ford, who has a preoccupation with another time—a time of childhood, a time of growing up, a time of street games: stickball and hide-and-seek. He has a reluctance to go check out a mirror and see the nature of his image: proof positive that the time he dwells in has already passed him by. But in a moment or two he'll discover that mechanical toys and memories and daydreaming and wishful thinking and all manner of odd and special events can lead one into a special province, uncharted and unmapped, a country of both shadow and substance known as ... the Twilight Zone."

Toy designer Horace Ford, emotionally little more than an oversized child, lives with his wife Laura and his mother. He spends most of his time reminiscing about what he recalls as an idyllic childhood that was all play and no responsibility. Several evenings before his thirty-eighth birthday—for which Laura has planned a surprise party—Horace pays a nostalgic visit to his old neighborhood on Randolph Street. To his amazement, it is exactly as he remembered it, down to the clothes the people wear and the pushcart man selling hot dogs for three cents apiece. Suddenly, a group of young boys rush past. One of them bumps into Horace, knocking his pocket watch out of his hands. The boy turns and grins. Horace is astonished to see it is Hermie Brandt—who was a child when he was a child! Horace gives chase, but loses him. Returning home, he tries to tell Laura and his mother of the



experience, but finds them extremely dubious. Then the doorbell rings. Laura answers it—and finds herself face-to-face with Hermie Brandt, who hands her Horace's watch and then runs away. Drawn by the mystery, Horace returns to Randolph Street the next night and finds the sequence of events identical. Only this time, he manages to catch up with the boys and overhears them angrily discussing some unnamed person who has slighted them by not inviting them to his birthday party. Horace returns to his apartment, certain he has witnessed a recurring pattern—one in which he is inexplicably a part. This conviction is only strengthened when, as before, Hermie Brandt returns his watch, then is gone. Obsessed by these events, Horace neglects his work. Sensing he is not well, Mr. Judson, his boss, orders him to take a leave of absence and see a psychiatrist. Furious, Horace refuses, and Judson is forced to fire him. When Horace tells his mother of this, she breaks down into hysterical tears of self-pity. Horace is filled with envy of the kids he's seen on Randolph Street: *they* don't have to support a wife and mother—all they have to do is have fun! He storms out of the apartment and races back to Randolph Street. There the events repeat themselves, but this time, the boys' conversation continues and it becomes clear that the person who

has offended them is Horace! He pleads with them to forgive him, but is ignored. Suddenly, he is a child again. Viciously, they jump on him and beat him up. Laura and the party guests wait for Horace's return. When the doorbell rings, the door is thrown open and they all yell "Surprise!"—But the surprise is on them. It's not Horace, it's Hermie Brandt, and *this* time the object he holds out is a Mickey Mouse watch! Horrified, Laura rushes to Randolph Street. It is quiet, empty of people, the stands covered over with blankets. Horace, still a little boy, lies unconscious on the ground, bleeding and bruised. Sobbing, Laura turns away from him. When she turns back, Horace is a man again. He revives, and tells her that what he found on Randolph Street put the lie to what he had remembered; in reality, his childhood was a terrible time. Now, finally, he is able to put it behind him. There's a party waiting for him at home. He and Laura leave Randolph Street—not noticing that high above them, atop a streetlamp, sits a grinning Hermie Brandt.

"Exit Mr. and Mrs. Horace Ford, who have lived through a bizarre moment not to be calibrated on normal clocks or watches. Time has passed, to be sure, but it's the special time in the special place known as—the Twilight Zone." 17

IN THE FOLLOWING PAGES,
WE PRESENT A NEVER-BEFORE-SEEN
'TWILIGHT ZONE' TELEPLAY
FOR A SHOW THAT
MIGHT HAVE BEEN.
BUT FIRST, A FEW WORDS
ABOUT ITS CURIOUS HISTORY . . .

The Story Behind Richard Matheson's The Doll

by Marc Scott Zicree

The fifth season of *Twilight Zone* boasted more episodes written by Richard Matheson than any previous year, and what a varied and entertaining lot they were: "Steel," in which Lee Marvin must find the courage to do battle with a robot boxer; "Spur of the Moment," in which Diana Hyland struggles to return to the past and stop herself from making a ruinous marital mistake; "Night Call," in which Gladys Cooper receives phone calls from beyond the grave; and, of course, the unforgettable "Nightmare at 20,000 Feet," in which William Shatner comes face to face with a gremlin attempting to sabotage the plane on which he's flying. But there was one Matheson script that was bought and never produced. Entitled "The Doll," it tells the gentle story of a lonely, middle-aged bachelor who becomes infatuated with a beautiful, handmade doll—a doll that seems determined to do more than just sit on a shelf.

Matheson recalls the genesis of the story: "We bought a doll for one of our daughters, and the doll's face was so mature and so lovely that the idea evolved: What if a man who was not married bought a doll like that for his niece, and the niece didn't care for it and he had to take it back—only he didn't want to take it back, because the face just looked fascinating." Regarding the character of the bachelor, Matheson reveals, "I just imagined what I would be like if I reached that age and had never gotten married, stayed in New York instead of coming out to California."

Bert Granet, then producer of *Twilight Zone*, commissioned Matheson to write the script, as he had the other four. But before

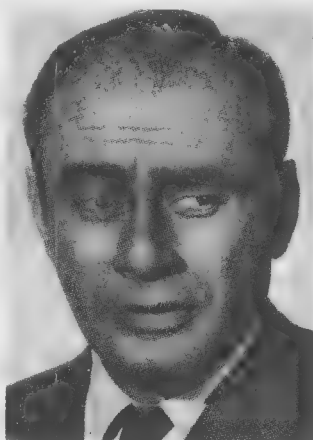
production could begin on "The Doll," Granet left *Twilight Zone* to take over production of CBS's *The Great Adventure*. His replacement was William Froug. Apparently, Froug read "The Doll" and failed to be impressed. At the same time, Charles Beaumont had an idea for another doll story, in which a little girl's talking doll threatens and ultimately murders the child's

neurotic stepfather. Obviously, two fantasies dealing with dolls could not be aired in the same season. Froug opted for the Beaumont story, which was produced as "Living Doll," starring Telly Savalas as the stepfather.

"I liked the script very much when I wrote it, and I was disappointed that they didn't make it," Matheson says of "The Doll." Although it was never filmed, Matheson admits he did have certain actors in mind. "At the time, I visualized Martin Balsam playing the man. The image of the woman was Mary La Roche, who played Keenan Wynn's mistress in my *Twilight Zone* episode 'A World of His Own.'" Ironically, the little girl's mother in "Living Doll" was played by Mary La Roche.

And what of the fate of "The Doll"—could it possibly be aired on commercial television today? Matheson thinks not. "It was indigenous to that time and to *The Twilight Zone*," he explains. "Oh, it's conceivable that somebody might do it on PBS or something, but it's not hard-edged enough for today's market. The limited mass success of my film *Somewhere in Time* is a demonstration of that. There are still people who like this sort of thing, but in the mass it's not something that goes anymore, which is too bad."

Too bad, indeed. But if "The Doll" is never to be viewed on the phosphor-dot screen, at least—finally—it can be read. An uncompleted and forgotten roadway for twenty years, the path has now been cleared, and we can all journey along it into a most delightful corner of the *Twilight Zone*.



Martin Balsam



Mary La Roche



The Doll

by Richard Matheson

THE 'TWILIGHT ZONE' EPISODE YOU NEVER SAW
A BITTERSWEET SAGA OF LONELINESS AND LOVE
IN WHICH FATE TAKES THE FORM OF A DOLLMAKER.

FADE ON:

1. EXT. DOLL SHOP DAY CLOSE ON SIGN

Reading: Liebemacher. CAMERA DOWNPANS to reveal the window filled with dolls.

2. INT. DOLL SHOP ANGLE THROUGH WINDOW

The shop, dim-lit, shadowy and still but for the voice of Mr. Liebemacher quietly SINGING an old German folk song — likely one of love and virtue. Outside, JOHN WALTERS APPEARS, looks at the contents

of the window for several moments, then turns for the door; CAMERA PANS to follow his movement. The bell above the door tinkles as he enters.

3. CLOSE ON LIEBEMACHER

Glancing up from behind his work bench where he is constructing a doll. He is quite old, his benign appearance belying his shrewdness. He peers across the tops of his square-cut spectacles, smiling as he sees who it is.

LIEBEMACHER

Ah; Mr. Walters. CAMERA DRAWS AROUND to include John, a pleasantly

ordinary man in his early forties. He returns the old man's smile.

JOHN

Mr. Liebemacher. How are you today?

LIEBEMACHER
(nodding)

Oh . . . gut, gut. And yourself?

JOHN

Fine, thank you.

LIEBEMACHER

I have not seen you for some weeks now. You have been ill?

JOHN

No, no, just . . . busy.

LIEBEMACHER
Ah. Is good to be busy.
(pause; gesturing)
Well . . . make yourself to home.
John chuckles and shakes his head.

JOHN
Mr. Liebemacher. I think you're the last exponent of the soft sell left in America.

LIEBEMACHER
Soft sell?

JOHN
It means you don't try to make people buy.

LIEBEMACHER
I should make the people buy? Nein. What they need, they will find.

JOHN
(smiles)
A lovely concept.
(smile fading)
I wish I could believe it.

LIEBEMACHER
(beat)
Believe it; it is true.
(winks)
And if it is not immediately true—
(winks)
—believe it anyway and it will come true. Ja?

JOHN
(appreciatively)
I think I come in here more to talk to you than to look at your dolls, Mr. Liebemacher.

LIEBEMACHER
(shrugs)
That is all right, too. To talk is, also, good.

JOHN
(musingly)
Yes; it is.
(brightening)
But—today I finally make the transition from conversing browser to paying customer.

LIEBEMACHER

It is true? You wish to buy a doll?

JOHN
(smiling)
I do. -

LIEBEMACHER
(askance)
Not for yourself.

JOHN
(laughing)
No. For my niece. It's her birthday today.

LIEBEMACHER
Ah; your sister's daughter—I remember.
(thinks a moment)
Doris, yes?

JOHN
Right.

LIEBEMACHER
And she is—how old?

JOHN
Uh . . . eleven—I think.
(ruefully)
Fine uncle, I am. I don't even know.

LIEBEMACHER
Well . . . these are the little remembrances one only cultivates in marriage and in parenthood. Ja?

JOHN
(nods sadly)
Ja.
(beat)
Little remembrances I doubt I'll ever cultivate.

LIEBEMACHER
You never know.

JOHN
I know.
(cheering)
Well; at any rate—
(looking around)
—what would you suggest?

LIEBEMACHER
Oh . . . no suggestions. Look around. You will find the right one.

John looks at the old man for several moments, then nods and smiles.

JOHN
All right. I'll take a look.

LIEBEMACHER

Gut.

He goes back to his work and John turns. CAMERA DRAWS AHEAD of him as he moves along the wall, looking at the dolls, a gentle smile on his face.

4. PAN SHOT DOLLS

Of every possible variety; beautifully made and dressed.

5. MOVING SHOT - JOHN AND LIEBEMACHER

Liebemacher sitting in background at his bench; John looking at the dolls as he walks.

JOHN

(across his shoulder)

You certainly make marvelous dolls, Mr. Liebemacher.

LIEBEMACHER

Danke.

JOHN

(wryly)

Though I can't imagine how you make a living, you're so easygoing.

LIEBEMACHER

Oh . . . there are different kinds of compensation.

JOHN

Yes. Of course there are.

(beat)

To be fulfilled, for one.

LIEBEMACHER

For one.

Now John stops and looks at a particular doll. After a few moments, he starts to move on, then stops and looks at it again, more carefully.

6. THE DOLL

That of a hauntingly beautiful young woman, smiling tenderly.

7. JOHN

As an expression of, almost, longing develops on his face. After several moments, he reaches out and lifts the doll off its shelf, draws it INTO FRAME to look at it.

The Doll

JOHN

(eyes on the doll)

Is this one for sale, Mr. Liebemacher?

LIEBEMACHER'S VOICE

If it is the one you want.

JOHN

(pause; softly)

Yes; it's the one I want. He returns the doll's smile with one of equal tenderness.

SERLING'S VOICE

An exchange of smiles in a little side street doll shop; one, the smile of a nameless female doll, the other, that of Mr. John Walters, forty-two, unmarried - and a very lonely man.

8. SERLING

SERLING

Shortly, Mr. Walters is to purchase said doll and take it from the shop; this much, he already knows. What he doesn't know is that, having left the shop, his path will be directed on a straight line - right across the border of the Twilight Zone.

FADE OUT

FIRST COMMERCIAL

FADE IN:

9. INT. RASMUSSEN DINING ALCOVE CLOSE SHOT BIRTHDAY CAKE

Twelve candles burning on it. As the VOICES of Sally and Vin Rasmussen and John begin to sing, CAMERA DRAWS BACK to show SALLY - in her late thirties and portly - emerging from the kitchen into the dining alcove where VIN, JOHN and DORIS RASMUSSEN sit at the table.

THREE ADULTS

(singing)

Happy birthday to you.
Happy birthday to you.
Happy birthday, dear Doris.
Happy birthday to you.

Vin applauds and whistles

through his teeth. John beams. Sally sets the cake in front of her daughter and kisses her on the cheek.

SALLY

Happy birthday, sweetie.

VIN

(in mock dismay)

Oh, man, look at all those candles! Twelve years old!

DORIS

(primly)

Daddy.

Vin chuckles and musses her hair a bit. Doris pushes away his hand with a ladylike cluck.

VIN

Okay; blow 'em out,
Granma, blow 'em out!

The adults watch as Doris takes a deep breath and blows on the candles, failing to extinguish them all.

VIN

Uh oh. Seven years bad luck.

DORIS

(as to a child)

Daddy; that's for broken mirrors.

VIN

Oh, yeah?

(winks at John)

Well, you ought t'know, you've lived such a long time. I mean, twelve years old! Wow!

Doris groans in surrender. Vin laughs as Sally picks up a long box from the sideboard and puts it on Doris' lap.

SALLY

From Uncle John.

DORIS

Oh. It's so big.

VIN

That's my girl. The bigger, the better.

DORIS

Daddy.

She tears open the ribbon and removes the cover from the box, unable to hide the look of blank dismay and the sound of disappointment as she sees

what it is. Sally glances at her brother.

SALLY

(forcing it)

Oh, isn't she lovely.

Vin represses a grin at the look on his daughter's face as Doris glances at her mother - whose expression is clear enough.

DORIS

(obediently)

She's - pretty.

JOHN

Tell me if you don't like her now. I can always -

DORIS

No, I - do like her. I . . .

CAMERA MOVES IN on the doll as Doris leans her, still in the box, against the wall.

DORIS'S VOICE

. . . think she's nice.

DISSOLVE TO

10. INT. RASMUSSEN LIVING ROOM CLOSE-UP DOLL NIGHT

Sitting on a chair.

11. UP ANGLE SHOT

The doll in foreground, John in background, smiling down at it. He starts and looks around as Vin comes out of the kitchen. CAMERA UP PANS.

VIN

Sure you don't want some beer, Johnny-boy?

JOHN

No, no; thank you. I - really should go.

VIN

What for? Stick around.

JOHN

(uncertainly)

Well . . .

They both look around as Sally enters from the hall. Vin drops onto the sofa.

VIN

Princess in bed?

SALLY

(crossing to her chair)

Mmm hmm.



VIN
(yawning)
Think she had a nice birthday?

SALLY
Sure.
(as she sits in her chair and picks up her knitting)
Sit down, Johnny.

JOHN
Well, I - should be going.

SALLY
Going? We haven't seen you in over a month. Sit down. Tell us what you've been doing.

JOHN
Well ...
(sits)
For a little while.
(beat)
Oh ... the usual.

VIN
How's your love life, Johnny-boy?

SALLY
(to Vin)
Leave it to you.
(as Vin chuckles; to John)
Have you been out with that woman again?

JOHN
Who's that?

SALLY
The one you brought to

dinner that night.

JOHN
Oh.
(awkwardly)
I haven't seen her in ... since before last Christmas.

SALLY
Why? She seemed very nice.

VIN
(clutching at his head in mock agony)
Aiee. Starts with the marriage bureau again.

SALLY
Now ...

VIN
(mimicking)
Now ...
(beat)
Gotta marry off old brother John. Find 'im a girl; set 'im up for the kill.

SALLY
(feigning disgust)
Uhl

VIN
(looking at his watch)
Hey! The fights are on! Jumping up, he moves across the room to the television set as Sally looks back at her brother.

SALLY
Haven't you been seeing anyone, Johnny?

VIN
(cutting in)
What are ya pushin' him for?

SALLY
Not pushing him.
(beat)
It's time you married, Johnny. You're older than I am. How old are you? Forty-two.

VIN
She asks the question - she answers it.
The picture tube lights up and Vin returns to the sofa.

SALLY
You may wait too long; Johnny.

John
(smiling; pained)
I'm all right, Sal. Don't worry about me. Bachelorhood isn't a - medieval torture, you know.

VIN
(watching the tv)
Hoo-hoo, you said it, Johnny-boy!
(a la Ed Norton)
Those were the days! Va-va-va-voom!

SALLY
(grimacing in pseudo-pain)
And I'm married to him.
(to John)
Seriously, Johnny.

JOHN
I'm doing fine, Sal. I'm not -

SALLY
(cutting in)
You are lonely and you know it. Living in that - dismal, little apartment all by yourself.

JOHN
(trying to change the subject)
Sal, about the doll. I made a mistake; I should have known that Doris was too old for that kind of thing.

SALLY
(unconvincingly)
No, she's not.

The Doll

JOHN

Sure, she is. Let me take it back and get her something she can use.

VIN

(watching tv)

She wants a wristwatch.

SALLY

Vin!

JOHN

All right; fine. Let me get her a wristwatch then.

SALLY

They cost too much money. John stands and goes to the doll, puts it in the box as he talks.

JOHN

No, no; look, I'll - take the doll back; get her a wristwatch instead. It won't be a - you know, diamond-studded or anything - but it'll be a nice watch.

SALLY

(regretfully)

I don't like to ask it of you, Johnny.

JOHN

Don't be silly.

(with some defeat)

What's an old-maid uncle for?

Sally smiles at him with sympathetic understanding.

DISSOLVE TO:

12. INT. CAR ON STREET

As John enters, he sets the doll box next to driver's seat. After a few moments, he reaches over and takes off the box's cover, lifts out the doll and stands it beside himself. He glances at it, smiling.

JOHN

There now; you can see where we're going.

(pause)

You're very pretty, did you know that?

(pause)

Yes, I think you know that.

(beat)

You don't mind me talking, do you? I don't have very many people to talk to. Mr. Liebmacher - Sal ... that's about it.

(pause; musingly)

Yes, you're ... very pretty.

Very pretty.

(pause; sadly)

Too bad you aren't real.

CAMERA PANS to the doll. The street lights flashing and illuminating her lovely face - especially the eyes - gives it almost the appearance of life. The car starts.

DISSOLVE TO:

13. INT. JOHN'S BEDROOM ANGLE ON WINDOW NIGHT

Faint CITY NOISES in the distance. CAMERA PANS SLOWLY across the darkened, unattractive room to STOP on John in bed, staring bleakly at the ceiling. After a while, he sighs and sits up, his expression one of deep melancholy. Standing, he trudges to the bathroom, turns on its light and gets a drink of water. He starts to turn off the light and sees -

14. THE DOLL BOX

Standing on a bedroom chair, leaned against its back.

15. JOHN

Smiles somberly and walks over to the chair, CAMERA MOVING with him. He removes the cover of the box. The doll's eyes are open.

JOHN

What's the matter, can't you sleep either?

After a moment or two, he sits on an edge of the chair and removes the doll from its box. CAMERA STARTS MOVING IN on the doll's face.

JOHN

Just a couple of insomniacs, that's us.

(pause; smiles)

Well, Miss ... what's your name?

The doll's eyes are in extra close up now.

16. CLOSE-UP JOHN

JOHN

(as if listening)

Mary, you say? That's a nice name.

(nods)

Mary.

(beat)

I don't suppose you have a last name, do you?

17. EXTRA CLOSE-UP DOLL'S EYES

18. CLOSE-UP JOHN

Staring, a bit blankly.

JOHN

(dully)

D1 ... D1 ...

(starts; blinking)

Hmmmmmm?

He looks around, then, smiles at the doll.

JOHN

I'm sorry I drifted away.

(beat)

How old are you, Mary? No, I shouldn't ask that, should I? It's not polite to ask a lady her age.

(beat)

But I can guess though, huh?

(estimating)

Twenty-five, twenty-six.

(smiles sadly)

Too young for me, Mary.

Way too young for me.

He stares at her, unaccountably intrigued by her face. After a while, almost dreamily, he reaches out and strokes her cheek.

JOHN

Such a face. I've never seen a doll so beautiful.

(beat)

Did Mr. Liebmacher make you up himself, Mary? It's hard to believe.

(poignantly)



Although I must confess I've
- dreamed of such a face
myself. I have; yes. Just
such a face as yours, Mary
Di-

He breaks off, frowning as if
he is losing track of a much
desired thought. Finally, he
lets it go and strokes her hair.

JOHN
(sadly)

I'll take you back to Mr.
Liebemacher tomorrow,
Mary. You wouldn't like it
here, I'm afraid. It's a
little-

(voice almost breaking)
- cheerless, don't you know?

CAMERA MOVES IN on them
as he lowers his head slowly,
eyes closing, and leans his
forehead against hers.

19. INSERT DOLL'S HAND
Slipping downward, probably
because of John leaning
against the doll.

20. CLOSE SHOT JOHN
Twitching and catching his
breath, looking downward.
CAMERA DOWNPANS to show
the doll's right hand lying on
top of his in a comforting
gesture.

21. JOHN
Smiling sadly, touched by this
"coincidence."

DISSOLVE TO:

22. INT. JOHN'S BEDROOM MORNING

John emerges from the
bathroom, humming dolefully
as he makes a few final
adjustments on his necktie.
Removing his suitcoat from the
closet, he dons it as he walks
to the chair on which the doll
is standing.

JOHN
Morning, Mary.

(picking up box)
I'll take you back where you
belong now.

He props the box on the chair,
picking up the doll to put it
into the box, then looking at it
with affection.

JOHN
Too bad I have no excuse to
keep you.

(grunts; amused)
That'd be a little silly,
wouldn't it? A forty-two-
year-old man with a doll.

(pause; musingly)
Still, I . . . wish there were
a reason.

CAMERA MOVES IN on the
doll's face until its eyes are in
extra close up.

23. CLOSE SHOT JOHN
Brightening as the idea
"occurs" to him.

JOHN
Of course. It would hurt Mr.
Liebemacher's feelings if I
brought you back. Wouldn't

it? Sure it would. And we
don't want to do that, do
we, Mary? After all the
months I've gone in there
and talked to him and never
bought a thing.

Smiling, he carries her toward
the doorway to the living room.

24. INT. LIVING ROOM

A small, dingy-looking room.
John ENTERS and carries the
doll to an armchair, seats her
in it.

JOHN

There. Now I'm not alone
anymore. I have a girl
friend. Mary Di-

(breaks off, mystified)

What is it?

(beat)

I keep thinking you have a
last name.

(beat)

But that's ridiculous, isn't
it?

(smiling)

Whoever heard of a doll with
a last name?

(amused)

I'll have to call up Sal today
- tell her I have a girl
friend.

(chuckling)

I'll tell her: She's a doll,
a real doll.

(looks at his watch and hisses)

I got t'go! See you later.
He turns and hurries for the
door.

25. ANGLE ON DOOR
John ENTERS FRAME and
stops to look back with a
smile.

JOHN

Don't go 'way now.

26. THE DOLL
Sitting in the chair, smiling.
The offscreen door SHUTS.
CAMERA HOLDS FOR several
moments.

DISSOLVE TO:

The Doll

27. INT. KITCHEN CLOSE ON DOLL NIGHT

Sitting at the table. Offscreen are the sounds of John EATING his supper as he talks. CAMERA DRAWS BACK to show a place setting in front of the doll, a few, token portions of food on the plate. CAMERA STOPS when John is IN SCENE.

JOHN

(with appropriate pauses)

Don't tell me now; let me guess. Uh . . . a model? No. An actress? Mmmm . . . no; you're beautiful enough but - I don't think so. What then?

(side remark)

You're not eating, you'll get sick.

(continuing)

Let's see now. A secretary. No. A . . .

His voice trails off and he looks at her intently.

28. EXTRA CLOSE-UP DOLL'S FACE

29. JOHN

Suddenly "knowing."

JOHN

A school teacher! That's what you are. Of course. A school teacher.

(grunts; smiles admiringly)

What happy students you must have, Miss - ?

(beat; pointing at her)

You do have a last name. I don't know what it is, but -

He thinks about it for a moment or so.

JOHN

Dillinger? No, what am I saying?

(self-castigating)

Dillinger.

(beat)

Dillon? Dinsmore?

(closer, it seems)

Dixon.

(gives up)

Oh, well, it doesn't matter.

(smiles)

You're Mary to me.
He stares at her, entranced.

30. EXTRA CLOSE-UP DOLL'S FACE

JOHN'S VOICE

That face.

31. JOHN AND DOLL

The doll in foreground, back to camera.

JOHN

That enchanting face. Is it - possible that Mr. Liebemacher made it up himself?

32. CLOSE-UP JOHN

JOHN

(wistfully)

Or could there have been a model?

33. JOHN AND DOLL

After a moment, John slumps visibly.

JOHN

So what if there was? What difference does it make to me?

(beat)

What do I think I'm going to do? Find out who she is? - Meet her?

He laughs in self-contempt.

JOHN

Sure. She'll take one look at me and say -

(mocking himself)

"John, I've been waiting for you a long, long time. I've always wanted to marry a - (increasingly bitter)

- balding, pot-bellied, middle-aged creep!"

He breaks off with what is perilously close to a sob and, abruptly, bends his head forward. When he finally looks back up, his eyes are glistening.

JOHN

I'm sorry, Mary.

(beat)

I get - pretty maudlin sometimes, I'm afraid. (forcing a smile)

I don't mean to be offensive. (pause)

Please forgive me.

He starts to eat in silence.

34. INT. LIVING ROOM CLOSE ON TELEVISION SET NIGHT

A variety program in progress: a woman dancer, a juggler, magician; anything. CAMERA PANS TO John sitting on the armchair, gazing steadily at the doll which is sitting on the arm of the chair, apparently absorbed in the tv program. CAMERA MOVES IN on them until they are in TIGHT TWO SHOT.

JOHN

Would he think me a fool for asking?

(pause)

Would he think me a . . . terrible fool?

DISSOLVE TO:

35. INT. DOLL SHOP ANGLE THROUGH WINDOW DAY

John ENTERS FRAME and looks into the shop uncertainly. He stands motionless, gnawing on the edge of a finger, then, finally, summons up the nerve to move for the door.

36. CLOSE ON DOOR

As John ENTERS and closes the door behind himself.

LIEBEMACHER'S VOICE

Ah; Mr. Walters.

JOHN

Mr. Liebemacher.

CAMERA DRAWS AWAY from him as he moves to the work bench.

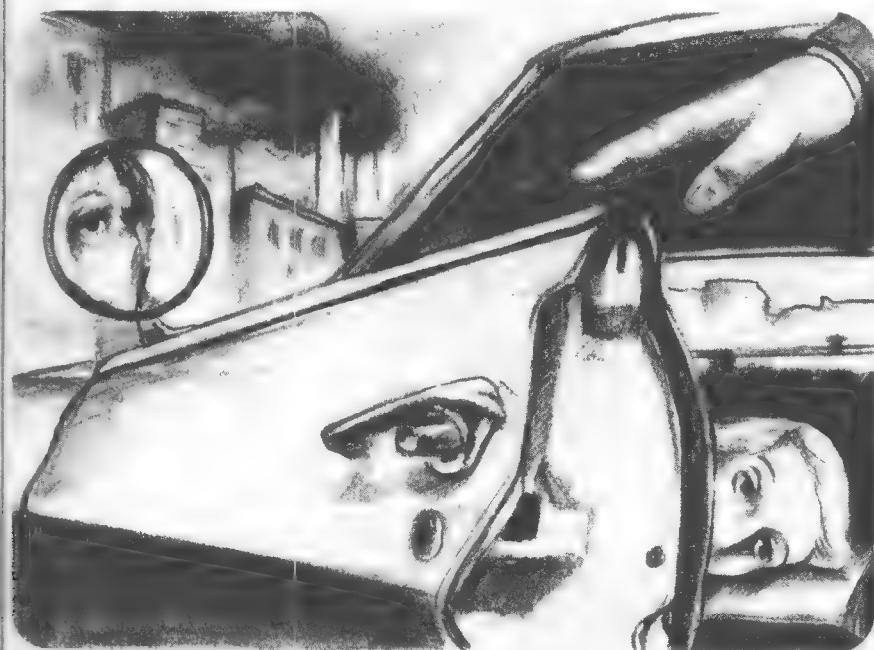
JOHN

(as he walks)

How are you?

LIEBEMACHER'S VOICE

Oh . . . gut, gut. And yourself?



JOHN

Fine, thank you.
The old doll maker is IN
SCENE now. CAMERA STOPS.

LIEBEMACHER

What did your niece think of
the doll?

JOHN

(swallows)

She liked it - very much.

LIEBEMACHER

Gut.

(gesturing)

Well; make yourself to home.

JOHN

Thank you.

Without wanting to, he turns
away; then, as if the memory
has just occurred to him, he
turns back.

JOHN

Oh; yes, I almost forgot. My,
uh, niece wants me to ask
you if you, uh - ever use
models for your dolls. The
reason she wants to know is
that the doll I gave her has
such a - unique face; so
beautiful, so - real.

LIEBEMACHER

Ja; occasionally, I use a
model. It depends on the
circumstances.

37. JOHN

It is clear to see that he will be
crushed if the answer is no.

JOHN

(mutedly)

Did you use a model for that
particular doll?

38. LIEBEMACHER

LIEBEMACHER
(thinking)

Let me see. That was the
one ...

(points offscreen)

... over there.

39. JOHN

Tense with anxiety.

LIEBEMACHER'S VOICE
(pause)

Ja; ja, there was a model for
that one, as a matter of fact.

John reacts strongly, then
remembers that he is,
ostensibly, asking for his niece
and tries hard to control his
excitement.

JOHN

Oh? How interesting.

(swallows)

Who was it?

40. LIEBEMACHER

Trying to remember.

LIEBEMACHER

Ah. What was her name?
(a finger-tapping pause; he
recalls)

Mary.

41. JOHN

Stunned.

LIEBEMACHER'S VOICE

Mary ... Dickinson. Ja,
that's it.

(beat; casually)

She is a high school teacher.
John looks at the old man in
dumbfounded silence.

FADE OUT

END ACT ONE

FADE IN:

42. EXT. SUBURBAN STREET
JOHN'S CAR LATE
AFTERNOON

Being driven slowly along the
street, John looking at the
house numbers.

43. INT. CAR CLOSE ON
JOHN

His expression a strange one,
compounded of awe, excitement
and uneasiness.

JOHN

(tensely)

How could I have, possibly,
guessed her name?

(beat)

Even that she was a school
teacher. I don't understand;
I just don't understand.

After a while, he glances to his
right, a look of vaguely defined
uneasiness on his face.

44. THE DOLL AND JOHN

The doll in close foreground,
seen in profile. John, in
background, looking at it with
uncertain suspicion. Abruptly,
he makes a scoffing noise and
turns to the front again,
discounting the idea as absurd.

45. ANOTHER ANGLE
JOHN FEATURED

He reaches forward to take a
slip of paper off the flat area
above the speedometer.

The Doll

JOHN

(distractedly)

What was that number again?

(looks at the slip)

5-5-3-2.

He puts the slip back in its place as he looks out at the house numbers again. His grip tightens on the steering wheel.

JOHN

(self-disparagingly)

What's the matter with me anyway? Why am I doing this?

He twists uncomfortably.

JOHN

What do I think? I'm going to knock on her door and tell her: "Hey, I, uh, saw your face on a doll and I guessed your name and Mr. Liebmacher gave me your address, so - hello?"

(groans)

She'd call the police.

(beat)

She'd have me committed!

(pause; gloomily)

You know darn well she's gotten married by now, Walters. What's the matter with you? A young, beautiful woman like that.

(groans again)

I must be out of my mind. He breaks off, tensing, as he sees, across the street ahead:

46. THE HOUSE JOHN'S P.O.V.

CAMERA ZOOMS IN on the numbers fastened to one of the front porch columns: 5532.

47. THE CAR

John pulls the car to the curb and brakes it.

48. INT. CAR JOHN

Looking at the house with a frightened, pained expression. He reaches for the door handle, then, abruptly, jerks back his hand and looks ill.

JOHN

Sal's right; I am lonely. So lonely that my mind is

cracking.

(scoffingly)

I guessed her name. Sure. Mary's such an unusual name; I never heard it before in my life.

(beat)

And I guessed, right off, she was a school teacher, didn't I? Sure. After about a dozen other guesses.

(covering his eyes)

No. No mystery here. Except what makes me think that I have anything to say to her.

He picks up the doll and holds it out as if showing it to Mary Dickinson.

JOHN

(as if to Mary)

Say, uh, here's that doll you posed for. How about that? Isn't that intriguing?

(beat)

By the way, will you marry me?

He looks grimly distraught, then, torturing himself, continues the imagined scene.

JOHN

I know I'm not much to look at, Miss Dickinson, but there's the compensation that I don't have any money, either.

Immediately, he groans in self-disgust and puts aside the doll.

JOHN

What's the use?

(beat; faintly)

What's the use?

He sits restlessly for a few moments, then, on impulse, starts the motor. Instantly, he cuts it off again, stiffening willfully.

JOHN

No.

(shakily)

If I don't - get it out of my system, I really will go crazy.

(looking at the house)

All she can do is -

(anguished)

- laugh at me.

He presses together his shaking lips and, bracing himself, pulls up the door handle, starts to get out.

49. EXT. CAR

As John gets out, waits for a car to pass, then crosses the street on trembling legs, CAMERA PANNING with him. He stops on the sidewalk in front of the house, hesitates.

JOHN

She probably doesn't even live here anymore..

(pause; grimly)

Oh . . . well, play it out; man - play it out.

With the expression of a prisoner about to face the firing squad, he forces himself up the walk.

50. EXT. PORCH ANGLE ON WALK

John comes up the walk with timorous reluctance, ascends the porch steps and moves to the mailbox, CAMERA PANNING with him. Looking straight ahead, he tightens his face into a rigid mask, then, abruptly, ducks his head to look at the name on the mailbox. He squeaks in surprise.

51. INSERT MAILBOX

The nameplate reads: Mary Dickinson.

JOHN'S VOICE

She is here.

52. JOHN

Shudders, staring at her name.

JOHN

She isn't married then.

(feebly)

Oh.

He swallows with effort, starts to reach for the doorbell, then draws back his hand.

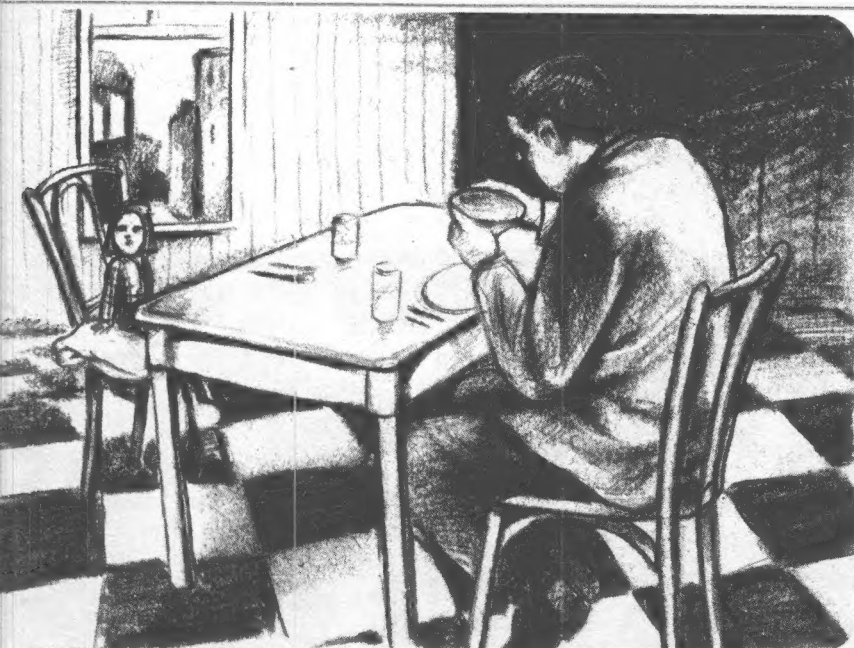
JOHN

She's probably not home.

Probably at school.

(bitterly)

School, my eye. She's



probably getting ready for a date.

He stares at the doorbell, starts to reach for it again. Abruptly, his arm drops.

JOHN
(with utter self-contempt)
Oh, I am ridiculous.
He turns away.

53. LONG SHOT HOUSE
Angle through the interior of the car. John descends the porch steps, strides quickly down the walk and across the street to get into the car, his face a mask of bitter defeat. Starting the motor, he pulls away, moving OUT OF FRAME.

DISSOLVE TO:

54. INT. JOHN'S LIVING ROOM ANGLE ON DOOR NIGHT
Almost dark. The sound of John's key UNLOCKING the door is heard; then John ENTERS, carrying the doll. He sets it down on the table beside the door, drops his key ring next to the doll and walks into the living room where he starts to pace restlessly, striking the palm of his left hand with the bunched fist of his right.

JOHN
Now what?
(beat)
Back to the same old grind?
Forget the whole thing?
He stops at the window and looks out.

55. CLOSE SHOT JOHN

JOHN
Why can't I just go up to her house - ring her doorbell and -
(with distressed amusement)
- run.

56. MED. SHOT JOHN
He begins to pace again, then stops abruptly.

JOHN
(tensely)
I mean, why can't I just talk to her? She isn't going to break my arm, is she? Isn't it possible she might be willing to - ?
His shoulders slump. He lowers himself into his armchair.

57. CLOSE SHOT JOHN
As he falls against the chair back, his expression one of defeat.

JOHN
Sure. Sure.
(a la Mary Dickinson)
Please come in, Mr. Walters. It's true that I'm a beautiful young woman and you're a middle-aged slob ... but come in anyway, you fascinate me.

He breaks off with a laugh which is almost a sob, his smile embittered, lost. He covers his eyes.

JOHN
(lifelessly)
How's your love life, Johnny-boy?
(beat)

Not so good.
(shaking his head and whispering)

Not so good.
There is a sudden offscreen CRASH which makes him start, jerking his hand away from his eyes and looking in that direction - toward the front door. Now he turns on the lamp beside him and, standing, walks across the living room, CAMERA MOVING with him. He stops near the front door, looking down at the floor with a strange expression on his face.

58. THE DOLL
Lying twisted on the floor, smiling up at him, its right arm raised. Dangling from its fingers is John's key ring.

59. JOHN
Many emotions passing across his face - uneasiness, awe, disbelief, then, finally, a kind of hope which defies all logic. Grasping hold of this with what will he can manage, he stoops down, picks up the doll and keys and, after looking at them another moment, stands and leaves the apartment hastily.

60. EXT. STREET CAR
As John pulls up in front of Mary Dickinson's house.

61. CLOSE SHOT JOHN
Looking toward the offscreen house.

62. P.O.V. SHOT HOUSE
There is a light in the living room.

63. JOHN
Sitting immobile, resolution waning fast. He looks over worriedly at the doll.

JOHN
Is it possible?
64. THE DOLL
Smiling with assurance.

JOHN'S VOICE
Is it?

The Doll

65. JOHN AND DOLL

JOHN

(surrendering again)

No. It was just an accident, you falling like that. It wasn't any . . . sign.

(pause; grits his teeth)

It doesn't matter what it was. I can't back down now; I can't.

(pause; bracing himself)

Well, here goes nothing.

Grabbing the doll, he opens the car door.

66. EXT. CAR

As John gets out with the doll and, driving himself to it, starts up the walk toward the house.

67. LONG SHOT ANGLE FROM PORCH

John comes up the walk, slows down, then forces himself up the steps and across the porch to the door, CAMERA PANNING with him. Once more, he is ready to bolt. He looks at the doll pleadingly.

JOHN

Tell me this is what I'm supposed to do. Tell me I'm not just kidding myself that . . .

His voice trails off. He summons up another burst of courage and, grimacing, pushes the doorbell button. Instantly, he draws back in alarm, seriously considering flight. His lips begin to tremble and he crimps them together reactively, holding the doll in a rigid grip. He stares apprehensively at the door. In a few moments, FOOTSTEPS sound inside. A look of panic floods across his face; he makes a faint noise in his throat denoting terror.

JOHN

(feebly; pitifully)

Please don't laugh at me.

The offscreen door is OPENED.

MARY'S VOICE

Yes?

All John can do is gape.

68. CLOSE SHOT MARY DICKINSON

The face is recognizable as that of the doll — but it is much older. Like John, Mary Dickinson is also in her forties.

MARY

Can I help you?

69. TWO SHOT JOHN AND MARY

JOHN

I . . .

He cannot go on. He stares at her, astounded. At last, with the utmost futility, he holds out the doll. Mary looks at it, reacting.

JOHN

(weakly)

It's you.

MARY

(somewhat dazed)

It is?

JOHN

(taken aback)

Don't you recognize it?

MARY

Well, I —

She looks at the doll again.

MARY

— I can see the resemblance but — I don't —

JOHN

(more confused)

You didn't model for it?

MARY

(startled)

Model for it?

(beat)

Why do you say that?

JOHN

He told me you did.

(uneasily)

You are Miss Dickinson, aren't you? A high school teacher?

MARY

(dumbly)

How did you know?

JOHN

Mr. Liebmacher told me.

Mary catches her breath. Then

she takes a closer look at him. It is her turn to gape now.

JOHN

(uneasily)

You — know who he is, don't you?

MARY

(strangely)

Yes. I know him. I go into his shop quite often.

JOHN

But you didn't — model?

MARY

I didn't know I had.

(beat)

I didn't even know the doll existed.

JOHN

(totally confused)

That's odd. Why would Mr. Liebmacher do a thing like that?

MARY

(quietly)

Come in, Mr. —

JOHN

(startled)

Walters.

(incredulously)

You — want me to —?

MARY

Please. Come in.

He swallows; enters, smiling falteringly.

70. INT. HALLWAY

Mary closes the door and looks at him closely again — as if she cannot believe her eyes.

JOHN

What is it?

MARY

Come inside.

She turns and enters the living room. John follows.

71. INT. LIVING ROOM

Mary ENTERS, followed by John who looks around.

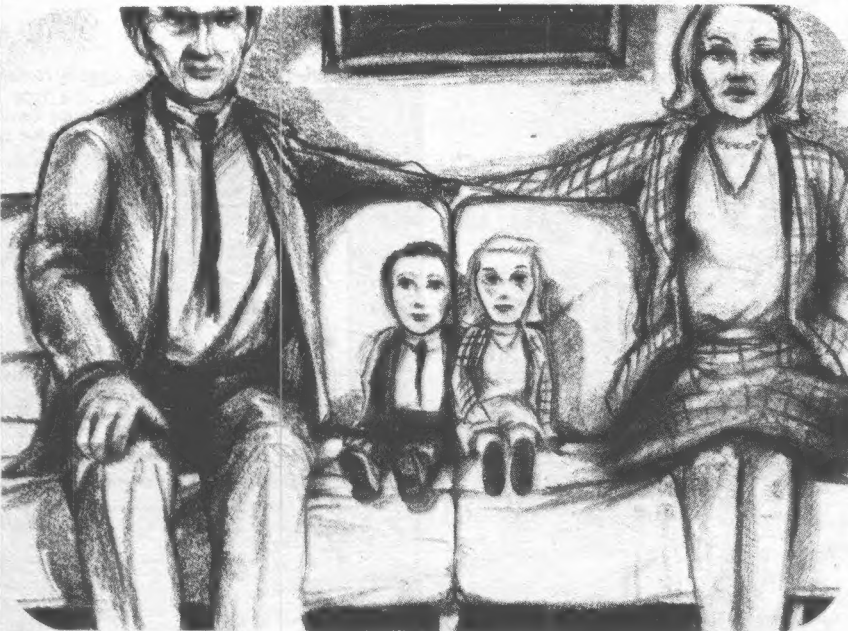
JOHN

(hopefully)

You . . . live alone, Miss Dickinson?

72. CLOSE ON MARY

As she looks around, obviously



under the grip of an emotion similar to that which John has been, cumulatively, experiencing: awe, gravitating toward hope.

MARY
Yes.
(telling the story)
Quite - alone.

73. TWO SHOT JOHN AND MARY

Looking at each other in silence, John smiling with instinctive friendliness after a few moments. Now Mary turns and moves OUT OF FRAME. He watches her.

74. MARY

Moving up to the fireplace, her body blocking off what she is looking at - something on the mantel. She stands motionless.

75. JOHN

Watching her, not understanding. Now, offscreen her dress RUSTLES as she turns. John tightens in amazement.

76. MARY

Holding a doll. CAMERA ZOOMS IN on the doll's smiling face. It is a younger version of John's face.

77. JOHN

Agape. Slowly, CAMERA MOVING with him, he moves over to Mary and takes a close look at the doll.

JOHN
(dumbfounded)
Hey. That's me.

MARY
(softly)
Yes.

JOHN
I mean, a lot younger, but ... me.

MARY
(smiling)
I'm not quite as young as my doll, either.

John touches the doll she holds, looks up at Mary.

JOHN
Mr. Liebmacher?

MARY
(smiling)
He told me that you'd modeled for it.
John draws in a long breath, understanding.

JOHN
Oh ...

MARY
He even gave me your address but, of course, I ...

She doesn't finish. They look at each other. Then John starts.

JOHN
I just thought of something.

MARY
What?

JOHN
(beat)
You're a teacher. Doesn't Liebmacher mean -
(swallows)
- maker of - love? -

MARY
(represses a smile)
Yes, that ... would be one translation.

They look at each other again. Then Mary turns and places her doll back on the mantel. After a moment, with reverence, John places his doll beside hers. Again, they look at each other.

MARY
(quietly)
May I offer you a cup of coffee, Mr. Walters?

JOHN
(saying so much more)
Oh, yes, Miss Dickinson. I would like a cup of coffee very much.

They move OUT OF SCENE and CAMERA MOVES IN on the two dolls sitting, side by side, on the mantel.

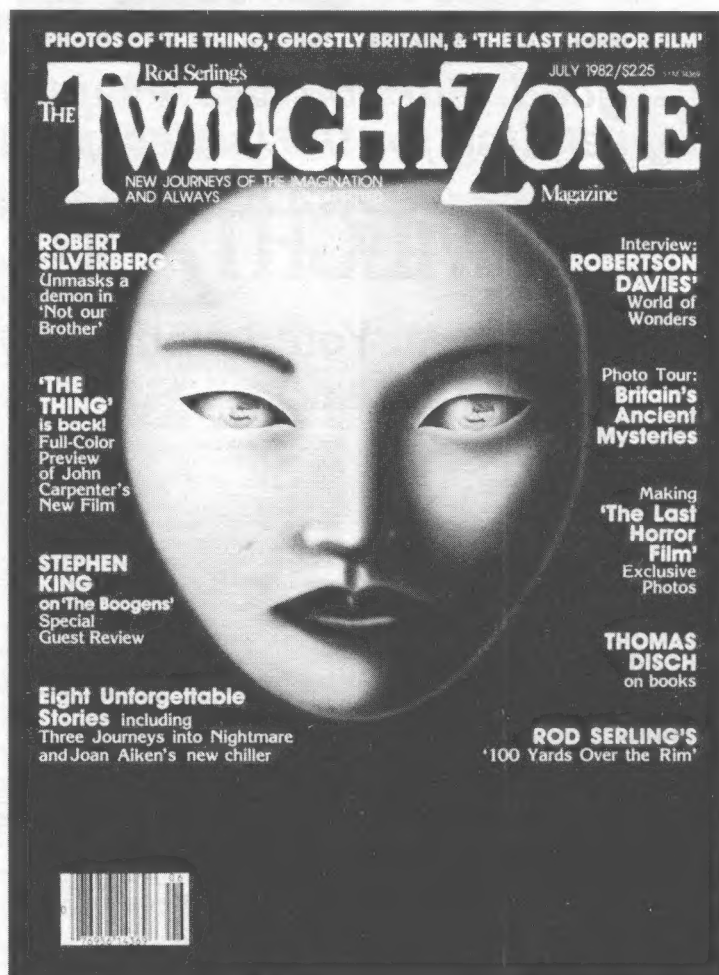
SERLING'S VOICE

Sir Edwin Arnold said it: Somewhere there waiteth in this world of ours/ For one lone soul, another lonely soul/ Each chasing each through all the weary hours/ And meeting strangely at one sudden goal. To which it might be added: Especially when assisted by one Mr. Liebmacher and the more accommodating influences - of the Twilight Zone.

FADE OUT

THE END 17

In July's TZ....



Robert Silverberg returns with a tale of terror about ancient rites, a demonic mask, and the thing that lurks behind it in **NOT OUR BROTHER** ... **THE THING** returns in **John Carpenter's** new film, previewed in color by **Robert Martin** ... And look for a special Guest Film Review: **Stephen King** on **THE BOOGENS** ... No one has stronger or more unusual views about fantasy, ghosts, and the force of evil than **Robertson Davies**—as you'll learn in July's TZ Interview, a fascinating conversation with Canada's literary magician, regarded by many as among the greatest writers of this century ... You'll also see Davies in a lighter mood: a lip-smacking treat called **OFFER OF IMMORTALITY** ... Visit Stonehenge, where the ghosts of Druids walk, and linger at a haunted abbey in the photo essay **A GLIMPSE OF GHOSTLY BRITAIN** ... You'll learn how an enterprising producer with little

money, not much time, but plenty of chutzpah made **THE LAST HORROR FILM** in the middle of the Cannes Film Festival, using a cast of thousands ... Rod Serling's **A HUNDRED YARDS OVER THE RIM** offers a classic *Twilight Zone* script—complete with photos—about a man who visits the future in an effort to save his dying son ... You'll also take **THREE JOURNEYS INTO NIGHTMARE**: to a chilling **PICNIC AREA** by **Joan Aiken**, a terrifying **TRIP TO NEW YORK** by **Nina Downey**, and an utterly ghastly stop for **FOOD, GAS, LODGING** by **Craig Anderson** ... Plus a typically wacky tale from **Joe Lansdale**, a touching fantasy from **Lewis Shiner**, and a vital report on the aliens among us from **Hal Goodman** ... And as usual, **Thomas Disch** on books, **Jack Sullivan** on spectral music, and a second helping of **ETC.** ... It's all in July's *Twilight Zone*, for just two dollars.